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see introduction

C. H. Mumtaz Esq.

February 1921.

The

Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast

THEIR CUSTOMS, RELIGION AND FOLKLORE

By

A. W. CARDINALL

THE first English Monograph on the ethnology of the Gold Coast Natives, based wholly upon personal observation by a British official. It deals in a very interesting way with their

Traditional History	Totem and Medicine	Birth and Marriage Customs
Chiefs	Justice	Daily Round
Religion	Land Tenure	Funeral Customs,

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THE NATIVES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES OF THE GOLD COAST

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The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast

THEIR CUSTOMS, RELIGION and FOLKLORE

BY

A. W. CARDINALL

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THIS, MY FIRST LITERARY UNDERTAKING,
IS OFFERED WITH GRATITUDE TO MY CHIEF,
CAPT. C. H. ARMITAGE, C.M.G., D.S.O.,
CHIEF COMMISSIONER NORTHERN TERRITORIES

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

By Capt. C. H. Armitage, C.M.G., D.S.O.

IN these days, when the phenomenon generally termed "civilisation" is extending, to a greater or lesser degree, over the Continent of Africa, there is a growing tendency, that appears not only among European residents but among the natives themselves, to lose sight of the inner significance of the old-established native customs, which will, in course of time, inevitably disappear or become myths and "old wives' tales." It is for this reason that the publication of monographs on the ethnology of African tribes, such as that written by my colleague and friend, Mr. A. W. Cardinall, are to be welcomed. Many Europeans are too prone to sum up native customs as did the schoolboy, who, when replying to a question as to the manners and customs of the Ancient Britons, wrote, "Manners, vile; Customs, beastly." But even those African native customs that appear to us both degrading and repulsive have in them the germ of some mistaken duty to parents and superiors: of reverence to ancestors, or to an unknown Being who exercises supreme power for good or ill over the lives and destinies of his devotees. Let us take, for instance, the practice of human sacrifice that flourished for so long among the Ashantis and other West African tribes. This terrible custom signified, in its origin, nothing more or less than a blind desire on the part of the native to "honour his father," or to pay due veneration to superiors. A

deceased person was, and is, supposed to be met at the entrance of the Under-World by a Rhadamanthine Spirit, who questions him as to his status on earth. Gold and other valuable property buried with the deceased, which are supposed to accompany him to the Under-World, constitute but little evidence as to the owner's social position in life—they might have been the result of successful trading or of theft—but if he were accompanied by a band of men and women, who corroborated his statement that on earth he was a big Chieftain, the Judge would accord him that position in the Under-World where those immolated at the time of his burial would act as his constant attendants and servants. In the case of the Kings of Ashanti, fresh victims were despatched to them yearly, in order that their status in the "Ghost-World" might be maintained.

In his Prefatory Note, Mr. Cardinall states that no work on the natives of whom he writes has, so far, been published in English. This is, I believe, a fact, but in justice to the Political Officers of the Gold Coast and its Dependencies, I would add that tribal customs have been carefully studied by them, and are embodied in many Reports that have been despatched to Head-quarters, and so to the Colonial Office.

The Author has had the advantage of the assistance of the Pères Blancs, who are established at Navarro, and whose devoted work among the natives of that and the adjoining Districts has given them an insight into native manners and customs that is accorded to few.

I cordially commend this work to all who are interested in the study of the ethnological attributes of our West African tribes.

C. H. ARMITAGE,
CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES.

Tamale.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SIR JAMES FRAZER says in one of his lectures: "The savage does not understand the thoughts of the civilised man, and few civilised men understand the thoughts of the savage." I do not claim to be one of these few. The following treatise is meant as a record of personal observations; the reasons of the customs and practices recorded are beyond my powers, and can only be made known by those to whom there is time and opportunity for many comparisons and much reading. The object of my work is to try in a small way to help the newcomers of my race, be they merchant, soldier, or official, in knowing a little of these interesting people whose innate industry and intelligence destine them in no long time to become a valuable asset of our Empire.

So far as I can learn, only one other book has been published concerning the customs of these people. That is a work by Mons. Louis Tauxier, published in Paris in 1912. In that book the author treats of the tribes on the French side of the frontier—11th parallel North—and mentions the Boura, Kassouna Fra and Nankana, whom I call Builsa, their own name, Kassena and Nankanni. His remarks concerning the people on our side are naturally second-hand or comparative. I have not hesitated to quote from his very learned treatise.

Concerning the Kassena, I have been aided most considerably by the notes and observations of the Rev. White Fathers stationed for nigh on fifteen years at Navarro, and by their quondam native schoolmaster,

a Kassena youth, Bali Cypriani. To them I render thanks.

My thanks are also due to the interest taken in my book and encouragement so generously given to me by H. E. Brigadier-General Guggisberg, C.M.G., D.S.O., Governor of the Gold Coast.

Throughout I have taken the names employed by the people themselves to describe their tribe. Ordinarily all of them are classed as Grunshi. That is a name given them by strangers such as Moshi and Mamprussi. Grunshi has been further divided by us into Fra-Fra, Grunshi and Kanjaga. The Fra-Fra included all the Nankanni, Nabdam and Talansi, and is a word derived from a form of greeting spoken by these people, who murmur by way of thanks or petition, "Fra-Fra," or "Fura-Fura"; Grunshi has come to be particularly used for the Kassena; Kanjaga is commonly but erroneously employed as the family name of the Builsa.

The three words Grunshi, Fra-Fra and Kanjaga are always used to designate the tribal names of recruits, either military or police. Recruits did not usually present themselves direct to the white man, but were introduced by actual soldiers, who thus perpetuated the inaccuracy, and since it is almost the invariable custom for a man when changing his life to such an extent as to become a soldier to alter his name, the recruit made no effort to correct the fallacy. Thus it is that one reads on the roster names such as Musa Grunshi, Adamu Kanjaga, Sulimanu Fra-Fra, etc., the man's real name being thus completely concealed. At the same time, of course, by such concealment it became difficult for an enemy to make evil medicine against one, since the evil spirits conjured to perform the ill deed would be unable to identify their victim. Thus it came about that the first Kassena was introduced by a soldier of another tribe as belonging to an undefined tribe which he had always classed as Grunshi; a Builsa

introduced by a fellow-tribesman who happened to have come from the community of Kanjaga assured the perpetuation of a tribal name, Kanjaga; and a Fra-Fra was introduced by a foreigner who so designated him.

In describing these customs I have endeavoured to make clear how intensely individualistic all these people are. Before the arrival of the white man each compound formed practically a community apart, and being of mixed origin the customs observed by each community differed. But this characteristic of the people is nowhere so noticeable as in their religious practices. I have tried to point out how sorcerers play the most important *rôle* in the life of these people, and yet are themselves but the medium through which the individual determines for himself what action is necessary, what cause has brought about misfortune, what help is best.

Like all these primitive people of black race, the desire to please the white man, to anticipate his wishes, makes it difficult to find out the true practices and the reason therefor. Direct questions are demanded by the language, and an affirmative reply not only is presumably required by the questioner but saves a lot of trouble. Once, when trying to discover why certain forms of scare-thieves were used in the farms, the particular question was: "Why do you use an old bed mat?" The answer came back: "I will say anything the white man wishes." Again, when a doctor was visiting the Chief of Zuarugu's compound he asked me what the inner wall of the huts was for. I told him it was a protection against a surprise by murderers or avengers. He laughed and said it was obviously to keep out the water, and asked the Chief if it was not so. The latter agreed. I left it at that. It would take too long to explain everything.

I have mentioned that Moshi is the *lingua franca* of the Northern Territories. For many years it has

been the custom to say that Hausa is spoken here, and one even sees written references to the Hausa traders and Hausa States North of Ashanti. It is time this ignorance was dispelled. There is practically no trade route available for Hausa traders. The whole of the trade is to French Territory and is northward, not north-eastward. As for the Hausa language being the recognised trade medium, that is a fallacy which found its origin in the old days when the soldiers were recruited mainly from Nigeria, and the few who came from either the Northern Territories or the adjacent French country had perforce to speak that tongue. To-day the Gold Coast Regiment is mainly composed of British subjects from the Gold Coast dependencies, and practically all speak dialects of Moshi or Twi. It is amusing to hear two men from Kanjaga community conversing with each other in a very corrupt, ill-spoken and ill-understood Hausa. They do so for the same reason that European clothing is coveted. It appeals to the love of swank natural to these people, and is as absurd as two English peasants conversing with each other in the French of their schooldays learnt in England from an Englishman who had never been to France.

The Northern Territories have approximately 400,000 people ; probably less than 2 per cent. speak Hausa, and those only in the centres of Salaga, Tamale, Gambaga and Wa. The black man here is a curious being. He will call himself Hausa if he thereby thinks he gains distinction or will please his white master, or sees other profit to himself in so doing, just as he will say he is a Mohammedan to his officers in order to maintain the Friday holiday, or when discharged to provide for himself a profitable trade in the sale of charms. In the two Districts dealt with by me a Fra-Fra who has acquired clothes and a horse will call himself either Mamprussi or Moshi in an attempt to show a superiority over his fellows.

Of the trade possibilities of these two Districts I have written nothing. That is beyond the scope of my subject. Personally, I am convinced of their future wealth. The population is there; cattle, especially sheep, thrive; the market of the Colony seems inexhaustible; the land is rich, producing grain, fibre and ground-nuts in abundance; the forest is untouched as yet with its wealth of oils, barks and gums. Beeswax, cotton, kapok, strophanthus and grasses at present find a better sale on the spot, and European purchasers cannot compete with local prices. But, above all, the people are industrious—the shortness of the farming season makes for that—and show such energy in cultivation, as well as in the local manufactures, that an Accra youth once remarked to me that these people would soon surpass in wealth and civilisation the forest-folk of the Colony and Ashanti, once the question of transport is solved.

One cannot close this prefatory note without recording how these people of whom I write showed their indomitable courage during the recent war, immortalising their own name and that of their regiment in Togoland, the Cameroons and East Africa. It would be absurd to say loyalty to their white rulers prompted this. Many still alive look back with longing to the lawless freedom of the past, oblivious of its darker side; the younger generation have not yet quite learnt to grasp the meaning of liberty, since they perforce are brought up to hear the stories of a past made more glamorous by distance and the self-glorification of their narrator. Besides, the very idea of loyalty is rooted in antiquity. Twenty years are not enough for so fine a plant to sprout. No; it was their manliness, their intelligence, their desire to learn that made them seize the opportunity, urged them to discard wholesale all the numbing influence of their old surroundings and practices and established for ever the innate bravery of their race.

They have broken away from their traditions, their future looms bright, and in no long time they will neglect and forget these hampering fetters of age-old custom which in the following pages I have endeavoured to record.

A. W. C.

Zuaragu.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE NATIVES

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	TRADITIONAL HISTORY	1
II.	THE CHIEFS	15
III.	RELIGION	22
IV.	TOTEM AND MEDICINE	39
V.	JUSTICE	50
VI.	LAND TENURE	57
VII.	BIRTH AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS	66
VIII.	THE DAILY ROUND	82
IX.	THE DAILY ROUND (*continued*)	95
X.	FUNERAL CUSTOMS	104

PART II

	LANGUAGE	113
	VOCABULARY	131

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

CHIEF OF NANGODI - - - - - - 12

CHIEF OF TONGO (TALANSI TRIBE) - - - 13

A GROUP OF NANKANNI - - - - 13

DAGOMBA CHIEFS - - - - - 18

DAGOMBA HORSEMEN - - - - - 18

VIEW FROM TONG HILLS, SHOWING SCATTERED COMPOUNDS - - - - - 19

VIEW OF TONG HILLS WITH A TALANSI COMPOUND IN FOREGROUND - - - - - 19

THE ROCK TINGANI OF THE TONG HILLS - - 24

AT THE FOOT OF THE TONG HILLS, SHOWING A TALANSI GRAVE IN THE FOREGROUND - - 24

A TINGANI BY THE ROADSIDE IN KASSENA COUNTRY 25

A NANKANNI TINGANI - - - - 25

A GROUP OF NANKANNI WOMEN - - - 76

BUILSA WOMEN IN NAKON MARKET - - - 76

TYPES OF NANKANNI PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINERS- 77

CHIEF OF NAVARRO'S COMPOUND, SHOWING THE PAINTED EXTERIOR WALLS - - - 98

A NANKANNI COMPOUND - - - - 98

A TALANSI COMPOUND - - - - 99

KASSENA COMPOUNDS - - - - 99

NABDAM TYPES STANDING BEFORE THE FAMILY TOMBS 110

FACING PAGE

ANCESTRAL GRAVES - - - - - 110

A COMPOUND FOUNDER'S TOMB - - - 111

IN THE NANKANNI COUNTRY, WITH A TINGANI IN THE BACKGROUND AND COMMUNAL VAULTS IN THE FOREGROUND - - - - 111

PART I

THE NATIVES

CHAPTER I

TRADITIONAL HISTORY

OF the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast little has been recorded, although they have been well known to white men for more than twenty years. Situated in the far North close to the French Soudan are the two administrative districts of Navarro and Zuaragu. They are bounded on the north by the eleventh parallel of latitude—the arbitrary international boundary between the French and British possessions—and on the east, west, and south by the Red Volta, Sissili, and White Volta rivers. The area is roughly some 1,200 square miles in extent, and is peopled by mixed races, of which the principal tribes are Nankanni, Nabdam, Talansi, Kassena, and Builsa, numbering about 200,000. The country itself is undulating, with numerous streams running southward to the White Volta and becoming deep and wide rivers in the months of August, September, and October. Here and there rise prominent chains of hills, generally of a most rocky character, presenting in parts some excellent scenery. There is, comparatively speaking, very little uncultivated land, and that lies chiefly along the valleys of the larger rivers and is what is commonly called orchard bush.

One remarkable feature about the Districts is that nowhere is a town to be found, not even a resemblance to a village. It is asserted that in the past villages did exist, but there are to-day no signs of them, and even in the thicker portions of the bush—in fact, everywhere—one comes across ancient middens of which the origin is unknown and which are situated at a distance one from the other as are the dwelling-places of the people to-day. The distance from compound to compound varies from 50 yards to the recognised length of a good bow-shot, say 200 yards. But the people are in no case the aboriginal inhabitants. These are unknown, and, except for innumerable stone implements, have left no trace. The middens in the bush are of more recent origin, as prove the trees which cover them, the pottery lying exposed and in many cases the tailings from ancient iron-smelting. Even in the clusters of trees which to-day generally are the sacrificial places—clusters so much thicker than one usually finds in the bush, as might lead one at first glance to believe they were remains of the original forest—one can still find middens, proving beyond doubt that the present forest grew over the land after it had been cultivated by man.

Of the present inhabitants the history is vague, and it is necessary meseems to know a little of the general history of the Northern Territories to understand why and whence these several and different tribes came to establish themselves in so small an area. For this general history native tradition would seem fairly reliable, and in some essential features it is corroborated by the written "Tarikh-es-Soudan," the work of an inhabitant of Timbuktu, one Abderrahman-Es-Sa'di, who lived in the seventeenth century, and by the earlier manuscript Tarikh-el-Fettach of Mahmud Kati. Both manuscripts have been recently translated into French by O. Houdas, and serve to record that at least two hundred and fifty years ago the oral

traditions of these people were the same as they are to-day.

Native tradition is remembered and perpetuated not at haphazard by stories told round the evening fires, but by special families attached to the courts of the greater chiefs, the sole duty of such families being to recite in chanting and to bring up to date the epic of their race.

I learned some of the following story from the traditionist attached to the court of the Na (king) of Yendi, and in M. Tauxier's work is recorded a tradition, most corroborative to the one I heard, which was related at the court of the Na of Wagadugu. For the practical purpose of this study the following is the story.

Very early in the Christian era there lived in a cave among the hills round Mali, which tradition places far to the east, a man most loathsome to behold. He is described in details most revolting. He dwelt alone, but had acquired the reputation of an intrepid hunter ; and one day, when the people were hard pressed by their enemies and disaster seemed in sight, they sent for this hunter to aid them in their need. He came, and his frightful appearance alone so terrified the foe that victory came to the people of Mali. The huntsman returned to his cave and refused all presents and thanks for his timely assistance.

Once again his services were called for in similar circumstances, and again he triumphed. This time the Mali people insisted on rewarding him, and he received as wife their chief's daughter. By this marriage a son was born a one-eyed giant of an aspect even more revolting than his father. Inheriting his father's skill in warfare and the chase, the young man soon made himself a leader over his fellows, and shortly after reaching manhood he led a band of them westward to found a new country, as their own had been devastated by famine.

This band eventually came to a town not far from

the White Volta. Here the young man sat down at the watering-place, whither towards evening came the young women of the place. From them he learned that the city was the abode of the great *tindana* of the country—(*tindana* means literally "owner of the land")—and he accompanied the girls back, accepting the hospitality of one whose beauty particularly attracted him. She was the only daughter of the *tindana*.

Arrived at her home, he was hospitably received by the father and sojourned awhile in the house as an honoured guest until the great day of the annual sacrifice. For this event people from all the country-side foregathered, as it was, and still is, an event of national importance. The *tindana*, as he does to-day, was to perform the sacrifice, and retired early to his bed. That night the young man murdered his host, and when morning came presented himself to the people dressed in the sacred robes of his victim. (Rumour says these are still preserved at Yendi, and consist of a black cap, black gown, and a string of yellow beads.) The populace was awed at the loathsome spectacle of the one-eyed giant and afraid to touch the sacred emblems of the office he had usurped. At the same time the youth's followers loudly acclaimed their chief and threatened to massacre any dissentients they heard murmuring against him. His triumph was complete. He married the daughter of the unfortunate *tindana*, and so founded the royal family of the Dagomba; with the aid of his own followers and the over-awed townsfolk he raided and conquered the neighbouring country, and thus there began an empire which is often called the greatest ever founded in pagan Africa—the tri-dominion of Dagomba, Moshi, and Mamprussi.

It is curious how traditional history almost always reduces its beginnings to the story of a single man. To learn the above a sacrifice of a sheep to the departed

is necessary and the names of all are chanted to the accompaniment of loud drumming. Unfortunately I lost my notes containing these names—the youthful murderer, the *tindana*, the girl, and the village—in a mail sunk by the Germans.

From now on the traditional history is less imaginative and the list of kings is preserved. The kingdom grew apace and soon stretched from the Oti river to the Black Volta, from the forest belt to the rocky and hilly country which lies more or less along the eleventh parallel of latitude.

The founding of the second sister kingdom, that of Mamprussi, is then related. The tribes lying between the two Voltas revolted and met the royal forces near Daboya, but on the east of the river. Defeat of the royalists was imminent, when the Na's daughter Poko (lit., woman) seized a horse—to the astonishment of all men, since women cannot ride—and crying out words to the effect that it were better to die than to live in servitude, led the amazed royalists to victory. But being only a woman, she could not stop the horse—a stallion—which carried her away from the battle for many miles, nor did he stop till he reached the shade of a great tree near Gambaga. There she descended and, being tired, fell asleep. To her came a man of the Busansi tribe (a tribe still settled scarce twenty miles away, but mostly in French territory). Struck with admiration at her beauty, he had intercourse with her while she slept, and on her waking told her what he had done. Ashamed to return, she lived with him and was mourned as lost by her royal father.

The result of their intercourse was a son named Widirago (stallion—after the animal whose escapade had brought about the union). As he grew up, he developed into a youth of great strength and beauty. His mother sent him to her father, the Na of Dagomba, who received him with delight and many

presents. As the boy grew to manhood he gave every sign of being a great chief, and his grandfather allocated to him the vast district round Gambaga, which to-day is known as the kingdom of Mamprussi.

Such is the story I learned of the foundation of these two kingdoms. That of Moshi is later, and the following is the account given by M. Moulins, who was the French agent for native affairs in the Moshi country between 1907 and 1909.

"Tradition says that some thirty-five generations ago the king of the Dagomba, who resided at Gambaga, had a daughter named Poko, whom he allowed to grow in age and beauty without troubling himself to provide for her a husband. The young girl was so displeased with this that she did not hesitate to flee from the paternal roof on a horse which she had taken.

"She reached the country where to-day is Yanga, at that time peopled by a scattered population of Busansi, and fell in love with an elephant-hunter named Riar, by whom she had a son who was named Widirago (perhaps in memory of the horse having helped Poko in her flight from Gambaga, for *widirago* means stallion).

"When Widirago was fifteen years old, Poko sent a messenger to Gambaga with instructions to tell the King of the Dagomba, 'You did not wish me to marry, but God has given me a son whom I ask you to help.' Then she sent Widirago to present himself to his grandfather, who received him very kindly and gave him four horses and fifty bulls.

"The Kingdom of Dagomba was at that time over-populated." (This is evidently true, for no matter where one walks in the bush, one will everywhere come across middens and other signs of a former dense population.) "So when Widirago returned to the country of Tenkodugu (*i.e.*, near Yanga) a great number of Dagomba attached themselves to his fortunes and followed him. He founded with his

band, on a site abandoned by the Busansi on his approach, a village which he named Tankuru, and which to-day is Tenkodugu.

" From this time his power continued to grow with the continual arrival of Dagomba, who came in crowds to follow his authority. On the other hand, the neighbouring populations were few and divided. Thus he was able to impose his overlordship on them.

" Meanwhile Widirago had married and had numerous sons. When they grew up he made them chiefs over the neighbouring districts, notably at Fadi N'Gurma, imposing by force his will on those who did not willingly submit."

At that time the country known to-day as Moshi was peopled by the Nimsi and Grunshi, who, without any central authority, warred continuously with each other. The head of one of these Nimsi settlements sent Widirago one of his daughters as a present, and the Dagomba chieftain gave her to his son Zungurana, who had by her a son Oubry.

Some time later the Nimsi again sent to Widirago, asking him to take their country under his protection. He accepted their offer, but died while marching through his protectorate at Sarabutenga. Zungurana succeeded his father and gave to Oubry, his son, the governorship over the Nimsi.

In course of time Oubry became a great warrior and conqueror. He took Wagadugu and created what is to-day the kingdom of the Moshi. After his death the Moshi-speaking empire continued to grow until it stretched from Timbuktu to Salaga, from the confines of the kingdom of Borgu to the outposts of the great Mandingo empire. It included numerous tribes of the aborigines, and swept round remnants of these and other tribes fugitive in the hilly regions or in the marshy plains where the Moshi horsemen were unable to penetrate. It is with some of these remnants and fugitives that this treatise proposes to deal.

One cannot but be struck by the similarity of the two accounts—Moshi and Dagomba—and it would seem evident that the ruling people have certainly come from the east. The Moshi carried on their conquests and, from the Tarikh-es-Soudan, were in possession of Timbuktu itself. Their occupation of this historic city was of but brief duration, probably early in the fourteenth century, and is recorded thus :

" It is, we are told, the Sultan Kankan-Musa who built the minaret of the great mosque of Timbuktu, and it was during the reign of one of the princes of his dynasty that the Sultan of the Moshi, at the head of a great army, made an expedition against this town. Seized with fear, the men of Melli fled and abandoned Timbuktu to its assailants. The Sultan of Moshi then entered the town, sacked, burnt and destroyed it, and after having slain all whom he succeeded in seizing, and having taken possession of all the wealth he could find, he returned to his own country. The men of Melli returned then to Timbuktu and ruled there again for a hundred years."

The author of the Tarikh cites in corroboration an unknown work by one Ahmed Baba.

It is presumably about this time that the Moshi conquered the Dagati country, which lies to the west along the Black Volta and to the north of Wa, which Dagomba tradition claims as theirs.

Thus the great Moshi-speaking empire encircled the districts about which I write approximately five hundred years ago. It would appear that where they were able to make use of horses in their warfare they were triumphant. Both Tarikh recount attacks on them by Mohammedan rulers, but at no time till the arrival of the French were the Moshi subdued—leastways, there seems no record of such an event. Meanwhile Busansi and Grunshi (Issala and Kassena) maintained an independence in the midst of Moshi,

Mamprussi, and Dagomba. The great rivers and rocky hills of the country seem to account for this; but a more or less peaceful penetration by bands of exiles, fugitives, and robbers took the place of warlike invasions, and these sought to establish a form of government similar to that of their homeland.

At some time, probably towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the Ashanti power was at its zenith, and in Dr. Claridge's "History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti" the king of Ashanti, Osei Opoku, is named as the conqueror of Dagomba. At Yendi the record of the defeat is passed over, but the fact remains that there lives to-day at Yendi an Ashanti, a visitor to his uncle there, who, before the advent of the Germans, acted as a kind of consul and tax-gatherer. The tax, I was told, amounted to the annual payment of 2,000 slaves. In 1821 the British Consul at Kumasi, Mr. J. Dupuis, records in his "Journal of a Residence in Ashantee" that the Dagomba capital Yendi, and other large towns of the country, pay as an annual tribute five hundred slaves, two hundred cows, four hundred sheep and cloths, and that smaller towns are taxed in proportion.

The Grunshi, Busansi, Konkomba, Tchokossi, and other independent tribes were raided regularly to procure the necessary number of slaves, and when hard put to it the Na of Dagomba asked his relatives of Mossi and Mamprussi to help him in his payment. Be it noted that these three kingdoms seem never to have forgotten their family ties, and to this day observe the relationship by an interchange of messengers on all occasions of great national importance.

About 1860 the tribute was not forthcoming, and the Na of Dagomba sought the aid of some Zaberimi raiders to collect the slaves for him. The Zaberimi were living to the north-east of Fadi N'Gurma, the most easterly of the Moshi kingdoms, and had the reputation of being valiant warriors and horsemen.

The offer was accepted and the Zaberimi became for a short time a sort of mercenary irregular force attached to the court of Yendi. From time to time their services were in request by petty Chiefs of the Dagomba or Moshi blood who were endeavouring to set themselves up in the old way. They repeated the story of the Saxons in our own country, and proved a great nuisance and embarrassment to one of these petty Chiefs, who sought the assistance of the Na to rid him of his noxious allies. The Na defeated the Zaberimi, who sought refuge with another petty Chieftain, one Musa, a Mohammedan Issala, who was busy founding a kingdom around Sati, a village which lies close to the present international boundary. Musa not only sheltered the fugitive Zaberimi, but aided them to revenge their defeat. A second battle took place, with the result that the Dagomba were utterly routed and had to flee across the Volta. The Zaberimi then turned on Musa and slew him, and established their dominion over the whole of the Issala country, whence they raided north, south, east and west. From time to time they suffered defeat, but the unorganised tribes had no cohesion, and victory did but serve to reawaken the jealousy and mutual distrust which disaster had only momentarily concealed.

On the death of Gazari, the leader of the Zaberimi, dissension broke out between Babatu and Hamana. The latter was forced to flee. Fortunately for him, the French had reached Wagadugu, and in September, 1896, he came to them as King of Grunshi and entered into a treaty of protection. His claim to the country of Grunshi was absurd, but at the time gave the French the opportunity to produce a treaty of protection over a country to which we could at the time produce no title at all, since it was a land of which our emissary in 1894 had reported there was no Chief of sufficient standing with whom a treaty could be made.

Babatu meanwhile had continued the annual

raiding, sustaining a severe defeat at Sandema from the temporarily united Builsa. He was forced to recross the Sissili river to recuperate, and on his return met the French forces near the same place, and by them was utterly and finally routed, so that he had to seek safety with the British, who had reached Yagaba.

Eventually the British and French came to an agreement and the eleventh parallel was fixed as the boundary, thus dividing the Kassena and Nankanni tribes more or less equally between both parties.

In these two districts each community—each family even—still preserves the tradition of the place whence its founder came; and a few examples will show how mixed in blood the people have become. For instance, in Navarro there are Sections which trace their origin to Zekko, to Po; a Section of Kologu came from near Kibelli; parts of Mayoro came from Kayoro, which in turn is said to have come from near Kibelli. The whole of the Builsa country is inhabited by families which have migrated from far to the west, to the north—in fact, from all points of the compass. The Nankanni assert that some came from what to-day is called Mamprussi, some from the far north, and some from Dagomba. It is the same with Talansi and Nabdam. It would seem that in the past the country was, so to speak, in a state of flux. The causes contributory to this state of things are numerous, but it is not possible to learn the origin of each family. The Section of Bongo, to which the present Chief himself belongs, came from Mamprussi, exiled thence for treason against the Na (king). They settled at Bongo on the invitation of the Awubugu people, who were hard pressed by invading families of the Fra people, traces of whom are to-day found in Nakon. The Mamprussi were triumphant and remained in the land and intermarried with the Awubugu, who to-day are known no more. Their success persuaded others, for some unknown reason, to follow.

Families crossed from Mamprussi and settled on the land which forms parts of Gawri, Via, and Zokko. Via preserves the tradition by regarding the crocodile as taboo, for they say that when crossing the Volta they left their father behind. He was too old to cross, but a crocodile offered him free transport, and, this being accepted, the old man came safely over the river on its back. This friendly help gives the reptile immunity to this day in Via. Most of Zokko and Gawri people, however, both kill and eat it.

A similar story is told of the Chief's family at Tongo. They came from Mamprussi and met the Gungu people near the Tong Hills. Land was provided them, and in course of time the Gungu element disappeared. The hill people, who until comparatively recently have endeavoured to maintain their independence, migrated to the hills from Nasia, on the border-line of Mamprussi and Dagomba. There had been an inter-family war at Nasia and the vanquished had fled as far as the Tong Hills.

At Nangodi the Chief's family is from Mamprussi and of the blood-royal. Its founder had waged war against his relative the Na, and, being driven into exile, came with his followers to Nangodi, where the Nabdam people gave them land.

The present Chief is the fortieth of his line. With an average rule of five years, the Mamprussi occupation would therefore be some two hundred years. The number of Chiefs is preserved by a collection of stones. Bolgatanga traces its origin from Fadi-N'gurma.

But in all these histories it must be remembered that they apply only to the family of which their narrator happens to belong. The names of Bongo, Zokko, etc., are not the names of families or communities; they are the names of certain districts or divisions of the land. Thus in Navarro, which covers an area of between twenty to twenty-five square miles and includes twenty-five sections, all of which have

CHIEF OF NANGODI.

[face p. 12.]

CHIEF OF TONGO (TALANSI TRIBE).

A GROUP OF NANKANNI.

[face p. 13.]

names, there are as many histories as there are divisions, and a man from one section visiting another says he is going to Navarro, no matter what his direction.

The story of Paga is that they come from Kibelli. Three brothers had fought against their family and been worsted. They had to flee, and with them went their sister. These three came to Paga and founded families there, and gave their sister that part of the land which is called Paga-bru. Gania section of Navarro was founded by a hunter from Po. He had wounded a buffalo which fell down at Kulnaba, its horns excavating the lagoon which is found there. While admiring his kill there came to him a man of Biung. The two made friends, and later the Biung man gave his daughter to him from Po and land near where the beast was slain. Thus came Gania; but since that time the family has moved a little to the east, but their old dwelling-places are still known and can easily be seen by the middens in the bush near Kulnaba.

Thus private quarrels, family quarrels, tribal quarrels have practically everywhere peopled the land, with here and there a community founded by a hunter or some individual of great prowess. But it is interesting to note that the sections named Biung (a word of forgotten meaning) nearly always lay claim to the fact that they themselves were from the earth and that their ancestors dwelt in holes in the ground. I have never been able to persuade one of these people to show me these caves or holes, although, both at Navarro and at Zuaragu, Biung sections exist.

Such is the traditional history of the past—a long record of migration and its causes. Other details are forgotten and no outstanding event is remembered until the recent advent of Babatu, the contemporary and rival of the slave-raider Samory. Zuaragu District was unaffected by this chieftain, but he left his mark at most places in Navarro District, laying waste most

of the land of the Builsa and harrying and enslaving the people settled between the rocky hills near Zokko and Tiana. The story of Babatu and Samory has yet to be written. It is a modern tale and brings the history of these Districts down to the advent of the white man, when Babatu, in flight from the French, eventually found refuge at Yendi, where he died.

CHAPTER II

THE CHIEFS

COMING as these people have from all directions, and living apart the one from the other in compounds which are to all intents nothing else than fortresses surrounded by farm lands and patches of pasture, it is evident that there could be but little unity or cohesion, either in their customs or their government. Thus it is extremely difficult to discover what are the practices of the land. Similarity in general there exists, but in details it is often hard to reconcile the different habits to one origin.

The language of the people naturally differs too, but is obviously of one origin—a language which seems to cover the whole of the land in these parts, from north of the Twi-speakers to the Bambara and Fulani tribes of the Niger. I know of no name to this tongue. It is found among Konkomba, Dagomba, Moshi, Mamprussi, Kusasi, Nankanni, Nabdam, Builsa, Dagati, and Lobi. The so-called Issala Grunshi, Fra people, and Kassena Grunshi could not be understood by the others, but undoubtedly, were these dialects to be written, distinct traces and similarities would be discovered.

But apart from this divergence of dialects, there is one great similarity in all these tribes. And that is the institution of the *tindana* (Moshi, Mamprussi, Dagomba, etc.), *tigatu* (Kassena), *tengyona* (Builsa), *tengsoba* (Moshi). This is the owner of the land, which in every case is the literal meaning of the word.

It does not matter from whom one seeks the origin of the term and its institution. Everywhere the same story is related. The *tindana* was the original owner of the land, and is so to this day.

M. Tauxier explains in his "Le Noir du Soudan" how their existence is very probably due to the superposition of a conquering on the conquered race. To a certain extent that is absolutely true. Not only in Moshi, but also in Mamprussi and Dagomba, the Chiefs are not of the blood of the people of the land. As related above, they keep preserved by special court traditionists the story of their arrival in the country and their seizure of the chiefship as well as their subsequent history. These traditions agree in that the first arrivals of these Chief-families seized and slew the *tindana* of the land and thus came to them their overlordship. At Yendi, for instance, the Na of Dagomba preserves to this day the cap, gown, and necklace which were the insignia of the principal *tindana*, whom his forefather slew. But the Na has never dared to arrogate to himself the duties of *tindana*. In fact, he humbles himself before him and appears disguised as a poor man when occasion arises for him to visit the *tindana*. For the latter not only owns the land, but by reason of his ownership is the only one who knows or is known to the spirit of the land. And it is worship of the earth-gods that is common throughout the country. It is said that there is no place without a *tindana*, and to this day when people move into uninhabited country, owing, perhaps, to the poverty of soil in their own, they obtain the land from the *tindana* who is nearest to the site of the new settlement.

There is not one god of the earth—there are many. Each community has at least one; and the *tindana*, who naturally was the head of the first family that settled there, became its ruler. And in these parts remote from the organised constitution of

Dagomba or Moshi, as time went on, the first family grew into many families, and though the *tindana*-ship remained in the hands of one man, the new families would no longer of necessity obey him. Thus there grew up a distinction between the overlordship of the land and that over the people. So long as the family remained in one compound, so long the *tindana* who inherited the title, and was *ipso facto* head of the family, controlled them. But when the younger families fell out and divided themselves and founded new compounds, then the *tindana* lost control over them and became nothing more than the high priest of the local Earth-god, the interceder between the people and the spirit which gave them the wherewithal to live. Moreover, in course of time, new people would arrive and ask permission to settle. The *tindana* would give them land, and though they recognised him as the landowner, they naturally turned to their own blood for a ruler over them. This goes on to-day ; one could quote many examples. The following, however, I think explains the whole process.

In the south-eastern corner of the Navarro District is an area of fairly thick bush (signs of former inhabitants, however, are everywhere). A forgotten number of years ago a hunter passed that way and decided to settle. Without propitiating the spirit of the land he could not do so. He therefore went to the nearest *tindana*, who was living at Buguyinga, some twelve miles away, and by him was appointed *tindana* of the proposed settlement. Returning to the chosen spot, he built his compound and called the place Gunua. In course of time a family came from the north, and, liking the country, asked the Gunua *tindana* for land. He pointed out the land called Iassi, but did not appoint a *tindana*. Still later more migrants arrived, and thus round Gunua there began to spring up communities from various sources, each acknowledging the sway of the head of their own

particular family, but each admitting the *tindana* as their interceder between them and the Earth-god. In course of time more people came, and to-day, forming the community of Godemblissi, recognise a Chief of Builsa blood and a *tindana* of unknown origin (Kontosi).

The Chiefs of the people in these parts are a new creation. Until comparatively recent time the head of the family or compound sufficed. There are three distinct sources of the Chiefship.

Above I have referred to the slaying of an important *tindana* and the seizure by his murderer of the insignia, or what in reality is the "medicine," which gives authority and power. It is obvious that if one man rises or stands out pre-eminent among his fellows, some outside agent is the cause; since without extraneous aid how could one man differ from another? The Na of Dagomba thus came by his authority (the traditions of Mamprussi differ in detail but are similar in all that is essential). He delegated his powers to his sons, and so in course of time every community in Dagomba was ruled over by a Chief (*naba*), and these Chiefs could rise by promotion to the Na-ship itself, provided the candidate was the actual son of a Na and had reached the Chief rank next to that of Na. The constitution is most elaborate, but does not concern, except in its effects, the two Districts in question.

Rivalry between Chiefs became acute in spite of the blood ties, and in consequence civil wars were common, especially when the time for promotion arose, which was usually at the death of a *naba*, although the Na reserved to himself the right of creating as many as he liked, since each of his sons was entitled to a *naba*-ship of sorts. And usually in these civil wars, or in cases of a *naba* committing adultery with one of the Na's wives, the offender was punished by exile and forfeiture of any right to reach the Na-ship. These exiles were frequently sent to the far distant extremes of the

DAGOMBA CHIEFS.

DAGOMBA HORSEMEN.

[*face p.* 18.]

VIEW FROM TONG HILLS, SHOWING SCATTERED COMPOUNDS.

VIEW OF TONG HILLS WITH A TALANSI COMPOUND IN FOREGROUND.

[face p. 16.]

kingdom; and to these parts had been banished the ancestors of the Chiefs of Nangodi, Bongo, Kologu, and Passankwaire.

Once established at those places they sought to form kingdoms of their own similar to that in the land whence they had been dismissed, but remembered always the blood connection with the parent family of the Na. In these efforts the two former were but partly successful, for the wild tribes, who had hitherto merely recognised the proprietary rights of a *tindana* when the season promised to be poor and the fear of famine prompted the need to propitiate the earth, were too independent to serve one who was a stranger. Kologu, however, did succeed in establishing Chiefs more or less recognised by the people in the neighbourhood of the Tong Hills, a fact which would seem to be due to the origin of the people themselves, which, as recorded above, is Mamprussi and Dagomba. Passankwaire was apparently successful in a part of the Builsa country. His story is as follows, and is typical.

A certain son of a Na of Mamprussi, one Wurume, committed adultery with one of his father's wives. He was banished and came with a few followers to a place called Kassidema in Builsa country. There is no such place to-day, but the site of the former compounds is pointed out. He then set himself up to rule the people, who, by the way, are all and sundry called Grunshi by Mamprussi and Moshi, no matter whether they be Builsa or Nabdam. To carry out his intentions he appointed his sons to rule over Sandema, Siniessi, Kadima, and Wiaga. He himself grew tired of Kassidema, and after moving to Kunkwa, where he left a son to rule, re-crossed the Volta and settled in Passankwaire. This was many generations ago, and in course of time the descendants of the sons left in Builsa country neglected their allegiance and forgot their Mamprussi connection, but the chiefship

descended in the family and continued to survive, protected by the " medicine " of the originally appointed Chief.

In the country which these exiled Chiefs dared not venture there were no Chiefs. But heads of families had heard of the proximity of the Mamprussi *nenamse* (pl. of *naba*), and for various reasons, such as protection, ambition, pride, etc., went to pay their respects, presenting cows or other gifts. The *naba*, gratified at this recognition, rewarded his visitor with a present of " medicine," conferring thereby some of the magic which had enabled him to attain so lofty a position. This " medicine " is usually some earth from the *naba's* compound and from the *naba's* sacred place, and its presentation and acceptance conferred power over the recipient and delegated power from the donor. It was not always practicable to name the visitor a *naba* over a portion of the land, and extraordinary titles were conferred, such as Asongonaba (chief of the *asongo* dancers), chief of strangers, etc.

Now the practice of nearly every family in this country is for the headman to hold a horn containing earth from the sacred place of his ancestors, no matter how far away that is. Thus the story of the family's original home is preserved with great truth. This horn is named *kwarra* (Kassena), *bare* (Builsa), *bari* (Nankanni). To it sacrifices are made, and thus the Earth-god of the homeland is appeased. The acceptance of a similar *kwarra* from a Mamprussi therefore was practically a religious fiction whereby the recipient acknowledged the ancestorship of the Mamprussi and the power of that Mamprussi's particular Earth-god. To all intents and purposes the newly-created *naba* was the son of the man who had given him his title and the horn.

The third manner in which the chiefship came to these people has nothing to do with Mamprussi or Moshi influence. It is peculiar in these parts to the

Kassena people, and the story of its origin explains everything.

When Navarro first came to be peopled by its present inhabitants (I am referring to that part in which the Chief's family resides, which is called Noghsenia), the country was inhabited by people who lived in the ground. To them came three Nankanni men from Zekko and asked for land. These three were brothers, and after a time a dispute arose as to who should be their leader. Now two of them were strong men, and if a fight were to ensue between these the new community would suffer. The two therefore met and agreed that, since they were equal in strength and much stronger than their third brother, it would be better to make him their leader, so that he could neither trouble them nor rob them. The arrangement was adopted, and thus the man with least influence in the family is still usually chosen as their Chief (*piaw*). This, however, was not altogether an evil decision, because the two brothers agreed to help their weaker relative in the making of his farm or the building of his house—a practice universally observed here to-day.

The distinction, therefore, is an important one between a *tindana* and a *naba*. The former cares for the religious observance of the people, the latter was in process of developing into a political head, when the advent of the white man interfered with and accelerated the slow process of evolution.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION

IN matters of religion, however, the Earth-gods are not alone. Everyone believes in a Supreme Being, the creator of life and the moulder of destiny. He is Wuni (Nankanni), We (Kassena), Weni (Builsa). His power being beyond limitation, he stands alone, and is usually not to be approached by mere mortals. No one seems to have imagined an appearance for him, but he apparently lives in the sky or sometimes is the sky itself or the sun. With no priests to inculcate doctrine there is, of course, much individuality of thought. It is interesting to compare a belief that Wuni is the sky with a similar belief as regards Nyame in Ashanti. It is not universal in either country, but it is typical of a common process of reasoning. As a matter of fact, the people here have many traditions concerning Ashanti. At Navarro one section traces its origin to a wounded Ashanti who was left behind at Zekko when an invading Ashanti army withdrew to their own country. His wound was in the thigh and this left him with a permanent limp. To this day Ashantis are called Kamboin-gwanna, *i.e.*, limping men. Again, in Builsa country, there is a story of how an Ashanti rearguard was massacred to a man.

This confusion of God and sky goes further in its similarity. The Kassena relate that in the beginning the sky was close to the ground. An old woman was about to cook, but the sky was in the way, so, in her

temper, she cut off a piece and made it into soup. The sky, angered, went away to its present place. How like this is the Ashanti story of a woman who was pounding yams, and the sky got in the way so that her wooden pestle hit it continually, till it grew so angry that it withdrew out of her reach.

Although many call the sun We, Wuni, Weni, they think as a rule little about him. He returns over the same road at night as he traversed during the day; and thus it comes about that an eclipse takes place, for the moon having lost her road gets in the way of the sun, who begins to eat her. People come out of their compounds and "beg" the sun to let her go. The begging is done by slowly clapping their hands. Another explanation is that a cat is eating the moon. But why cat, I could not discover. At new moon people sometimes take ash and, putting it into their palm, blow it towards the crescent, saying: "I saw you before you saw me." Otherwise they say that the increase of the moon would bring about their own decrease in strength.

Confused with We or Wuni is the worship of, or rather reverence for, stones. To these people the unknown has its origin above. Stone implements, which are everywhere very common, are explained as coming from God, or the sky, or rain. The same explanation is given for any curiously or attractively shaped stone, and these very many of the natives pick up on the chance of their bringing good fortune or merely because they are pleasing. Should good luck follow soon after, the finder may, in his consultation with the sorcerers, which I shall explain later, learn that the curiously shaped stone brought it him; and in course of time the spirit of the stone may acquire great renown. Moreover, nowhere have I seen a blood sacrifice on the ground itself—always the victim is slain on stone. The sky itself—or maybe the Creator—has a private worship paid to it. All are at liberty

to offer to the sky, and in most, but by no means all, houses, one will see on the roof of one of the huts a small pyramid of sun-baked mud on the summit of which is a small stone—usually a cast-away hand-grinder. This is the sacrificial place for We.

An eclipse of the sun is watched in silence. In October, 1919, an annular eclipse took place late in the afternoon, and as soon as the people noticed it most left their work and quietly went into their huts. They were afraid; but I saw no sacrifices, and afterwards they laughed at their fears.

I suppose, however, that in religious belief practically every compound is a law to itself, and the explanations of things depend on the individual imaginings of the owner. Thus the following is another story of the sky. A man and a woman had but one child. One day a python ate the babe. In their sorrow they called for help and four men came to assist. One knew how to track the snake, one knew how to slay it, the third was skilled in skinning, and the fourth was able to restore the dead to life. Thus the babe was returned to its parents and then the four men began to dispute as to who should have the skin. They were about to fall on each other, when the father of the child proposed to decide the matter by chance. He was to throw it into the air and the one on whom it fell should possess the same. They agreed, and the skin was thrown up into the air, but it has never come down. In this way the sky was made, and the serpent's head became the sun, its tail the moon, and its spots the stars.

The principal form of worship, as related above, is that of the Earth-gods. A man cannot propitiate Wuni—a belief in fatalism alone would lead to such reasoning—but one can appease the gods of the earth. These are many, and all have different names. They are invisible and abide in natural phenomena, such as clumps of trees, rocks of remarkable size or appearance,

THE ROCK TINGANI OF THE TONG HILLS.

AT THE FOOT OF THE TONG HILL, SHOWING A TALANSI GRAVE IN THE FOREGROUND.

[*face p.* 24.]

A TINGANI BY THE ROADSIDE IN KASSENA COUNTRY.

A NANKANNI TINGANI.

[*face p.* 25.]

ponds, etc. Generally, however, the clumps of trees are the holy places. These clumps are very numerous, sometimes reminding one of such as Chanctonbury Ring, in Sussex, sometimes of coppices at home. But always I am told the actual place of sacrifice is a stone. The *tindana*, whose office is hereditary, performs the ceremony, which varies in size. Every year, however, there is a general sacrifice, cows or sheep being slain which are the proceeds of the sale of the baskets and calabashes of grain paid by the people to the *tindana* as rents for their farms. It would seem that there is no rule fixed as to the amount of rent to be paid. These holy places are called *tingani* (Nankanni), *tingwan* (Kassena), *tangbai* (Builsa). It does not necessarily follow that a *tingani* was there in the beginning. For instance, in Sandema there is a clump of trees of quite recent growth. It is said that the trees sprang up suddenly round a man's compound. One can see the midden to-day. He could do nothing to stop their growth, and on enquiring from a sorcerer was informed that the trees were a holy place.

At Kanjaga there are two *tingani* of most noticeable appearance but of not great local importance. One is a small cluster of fan palms surrounding a tall one, all of them growing out of a white ants' nest. The other is a group of those short, long-leaved raphia palms found in the marshes in the Ashanti forest. It is situated in a small dale long denuded of other trees and presents a most striking view. Nowhere else in these districts, not even along the wooded bank of the Volta, have I seen this palm.

The *tindana* has many other duties besides allocating land. He selects and marks out the sites of new compounds; arranges for the annual sacrifices; introduces new Chiefs to the Earth-god; is the chief peacemaker when wars break out; orders the sacrifices when blood is on the ground or vile offences such as incest (*i.e.*, adultery with a female of too close a consanguinity

or marriage connection) pollute the soil; appoints the day when the new crops may be eaten generally by the community at large, since one is always free to cut an ear or two of grain to stave off starvation; in short, regulates all matters touching his deity.

To neglect a *tingani* is certain to bring the displeasure of the Earth-god. The latter's requirements are as usual made known through the sorcerers' stones, and are, of course, obeyed. However, at Saa, which is in Tyana, the *tindana* had learned that his Earth-god wished for a market to be re-established there. He did not hasten about the matter, and was duly warned to be more expeditious in future by having his son badly mauled by a leopard. So he told me.

The more one seeks into the inner life of these people, the more one wonders how life is endurable. There is first Wuni. He has pre-ordained everything, and is presumably in this guise of Mohammedan origin, but as the sky, he can be begged to desist or assist. The Earth-gods are most important; unless one appeased them one's stomach would suffer, since famine assuredly follows their neglect. If an arrow is shot in anger, if a man is slain, if anything untoward occurs, the particular Earth-god on whose domain the event took place must be appeased.

But everything else, either necessary to life, dangerous to life, unusual or unexpected, must also be appeased. Rain, therefore, is of great importance. Rain is *saa* (Nan.), *dua* (Kass.). This word, however, means more than rain: it combines rain, thunder, wind, and lightning. Thus one says in Kassena, "*dua ti*," it rains; "*dua kera*," it thunders; "*dua pepela*," it is lightning. Rain is in possession of a man just as is the earth. He is *duatu*, *saa-dana*, *ngwaro nyona* in Kassena, Nankanni, and Builsa. I do not envy him his lot. A *duatu* at Navarro in 1918 had quite a bad time of it when the rain failed. First many presents were brought to him for sacrifice, but rain came not,

The people considered he was responsible, and tied him up until it would fall—a Kassena ties a man up in no gentle manner. Still rain came not. They then ceased to give him food. At last rain came. He made no complaint, apparently considering the people were perfectly justified. I do not know where the sacrifices to the rain are made, but I understand the *duatu* calls from his compound to it. Late in 1918, at Zuaragu, when the guinea-corn was ready for harvest and rain was not wanted, a most menacing rainstorm approached. Everyone turned out on the top of their compounds—they are flat-roofed—and cried to the rain not to come. It was a great shout and the note of prayer was easily to be detected. The rain listened and came not. Rain in its form of lightning very frequently burns a hut or slays a man. No one in his senses would put the fire out or help the victim. Often if it is too abundant the rain-owner mounts his roof and threatens the rain with a knife or other implement.

Now everywhere are found stone axes and hoes. The Nankanni call them *saa-kugli*, which means rain-stones, the Kassena call them *kyiridora*, *i.e.*, the axes of the spirits. Everyone believes in these spirits. To distinguish them from beneficial spirits, or, rather, spirits who might sometimes be contented to allow benefits to come to men, such as the earth-spirits, rain-spirits, etc., I will call these spirits devils. They are *kyikyiri* (Kassena), *kukru* (Builsa), and *chichirigu* (Nankanni). Sometimes they are visible to men, and in appearance resemble the *mmotia* of the Ashanti, ill-shapen dwarfs. Frequently they are born of women. In fact, all deformed children are not human; they are devils, and their influence is evil. They must be killed. These devils' usual dwelling-place is in the bush and they annoy travellers by night by "throwing stones at them." Some men assert that often a woman who gathers herself a new dress,

i.e., leaves, from a bush which is inhabited by a devil seizes the devil together with the leaves, and in this way he has intercourse with her, with the result that a devil-child is born, *i.e.*, a deformed baby. Apparently the women do not believe this—they say that some men are devils themselves.

As to whether one's child is a devil or a human being only the sorcerer can say. I will explain later how the information is imparted. Almost invariably a deformed child is a devil; twins sometimes are, and now and then a quite healthy child is so proclaimed. Once the father is certain that his wife has brought forth a devil, he proceeds to the devil-killer, who returns with him to the house where the child is. There he receives a red-and-black hen and a goat, and gives in return the devil-killing medicine to the child and ties round its neck a ram's horn filled with a powder of earth, shea-butter and ashes. The child soon after dies and the killer is called back to bury the corpse. This he places in a large water-pot, and the father carries it into the bush, where, finding an ant-heap, he buries the pot and its contents. Sometimes the child does not die; and if after more consultations with the sorcerer the parent remains convinced it is a devil, he calls in the killer, who slays the infant with the horn. It is difficult, of course, to learn more exact details. I came across only one case, but I saw three of these horns or (*kwarra* Kass.), *dongo* (Nan.). The horn was round the child's neck, and when I destroyed it I had it pulled to pieces. It was wrapped in the wing-feathers of guinea-fowls. These had been tied round it from time to time, and I gathered that each set of feathers represented one devil slain. In this case fifteen sets had been tied on.

M. Tauxier notices this form of infanticide among a tribe whom he designates as *Kassouna-Boura* (*Kassena Bura*). *Bura* is the Kassena term for the Builsa and Dagomba bush people, but from his

location of the tribe must be the same as those I refer to as Kassena. He says :

" Sometimes the Kassouna-Boura women give birth to evil spirits—infants who, instead of being the re-incarnation of an ancestor, parent, quiet and respectable spirit, are the incarnation of a wandering, abandoned, evil and vindictive spirit. This child can be known by the fact that it weeps all the time, that it refuses to feed from its mother, that it is never at rest, that it is born with teeth, that it climbs on the roofs of the huts, over difficult places, etc. When these things happen, the *voro* (sorcerer) is asked what is the matter. He gives the usual consultation with his wand and stones, or stick only, and if the child is recognised as an evil spirit by the replies of the wand, it is given to a man of the village, whose trade it is and who is paid a hoe and two fowls. He takes the child away and kills it on a neighbouring hill. If this were not done, the father or mother would be killed by it later. This is done to-day, although evil spirits do not often come."

In all matters the sorcerer is visited and the consultation is as follows. The sorcerer never speaks while being consulted, and although the subconscious mind of the consultant enables the latter to obtain an answer agreeable to his inmost belief, yet he himself remains unconscious of having done anything, and would probably be much relieved if the result of his consultation was to declare the child a human being. The murder of children is prevalent everywhere here, but the details differ somewhat, and it is a custom rapidly dying out.

These sorcerers play a most important *rôle* in the life of the country. Practically nothing is done without consulting them first. They also explain the reason for misfortunes. In short, the whole structure of society is in their hands ; but for all that, they are not active agents ; their work is but passive.

To become a sorcerer a long training is required. A parent decides that his son should become one after consultation with the sorcerer; a man reaches the same decision as regards himself after similar enquiry. The procedure in these consultations is almost invariably the same. A present is given the sorcerer. No matter how small, he must do his duty and grant an audience.

He is distinguished by the possession of a bag. This is generally a goat-skin, pulled off the animal complete save for the head and legs below the knee-joints. Inside the bag are all kinds of apparent rubbish, some old bones, dirty little rags containing "medicine," weird-shaped stones, bits of iron, broken pottery, feathers, bits of skin, horns—a regular rag-and-bone merchant's collection. But the principal items are two or more smoothly-rounded stones little larger than a golf ball, and a stick. The sorcerer in Kassena is *voro*, Builsa *bana*, Nankanni *bakologodana*. The last is literally "owner of the bag." The stones are *voro kande*, *bakologo kugri*, and so on.

The sorcerer squats on a calabash, not on the ground, and in his right hand waves and shakes a bottle-shaped gourd with seeds inside, keeping up a continuous rattling until the consultation is over. The Talansi sorcerers wear round their necks the complete skin of a small black cat.

Naturally there is but little opportunity for a white man to watch a consultation, but I was assured that all were similar to one on which I chanced. After the present had been received the sorcerer squatted in front of his client, who was likewise squatting, and emptied the contents of his bag between them. He then began an incantation, calling on the spirits (*kyikyiri*) to come, whilst his client whispered to the stones, etc., from the bag what answer each would represent. So far the client had remained silent. In fact, throughout the performance he said nothing except to repeat

the request for the spirits to attend. After a time the sorcerer became a little excited as if slightly possessed, somewhat like the fetishmen of Ashanti when the spirit enters them, only to a lesser extent. The client then took hold of the other end of the magic stick, which the sorcerer had been waving about. The stones were on the ground between the two men. The sorcerer made passes, to all seeming quite meaningless, and eventually the stick held at either end by both men began to hover over the magic stones till at last one was touched by the end held by the enquirer, maybe once, maybe many times. And the answer to the enquiry is thus conveyed to the supplicant, who remembers which stone is negative, which affirmative, or whatever answers may be reasonably expected and which he has told each stone to represent. The spirits are then asked to return to their abiding-places and the consultation is over. Be it well marked that in no way has the sorcerer learned of the nature of the questions asked. The supplicant, of course, is persuaded of the wondrous nature of the oracle's reply. I do not know what the sorcerer thinks of the proceedings.

This form of consultation, which would seem to arise from the desire to get outside help in coming to a decision, is to be found throughout the Northern Territories away from the Twi speakers.

It is interesting to record that the stones used are hard, smooth ones found everywhere in the fields. They are said to fall from heaven, but are most probably disused hand-grinders. The people collect them, and one sees them at every compound, sometimes in quite large heaps outside the door on the ancestral graves, or, rather, the little mud pyramids which have been set up to make sacrificial places for the departed.

In matters religious as in matters of everyday life the sorcerer is equally important. The *tindana* would not make the annual sacrifice unless the stones said the day was propitious any more than a man would go

hunting if they told him the day would end in calamity. The poverty common to all sorcerers is a sufficient proof of the absence in them of humbug, and, if further proof were needed, there is the continual acceptance by them of recruits and apprentices, so that their number to-day is continually increasing.

In addition to the devils there are many other spirits. Probably everything has a spirit dwelling therein. Trees, especially the larger ones, are frequently their abode. A constable, a native of the Districts, on two occasions asked permission to make a tree in the station his friend. Permission granted, one saw later a piece of cloth attached to the bark. Sometimes fowls are offered. Their blood is first placed on a stone at the tree's foot and on the bark, and feathers are plastered on both places. A tree might get angry and fall on one; it is better to propitiate it, especially if it is near one's house. Again, it might be a benevolent spirit and would help one in some enterprise. The shea-butter tree is the commonest of trees. It is everywhere in the farms and bush, and when the harvest of guinea-corn is gathered a straw or more is tied to the tree. The reason for this was given me by several men in different places. They said the earth was pleased and had allowed the tree to flourish, so they in turn had given a present to the tree so that it would not take all the goodness from the ground and so ruin the chances of the crop.

The worship of trees is general throughout the tribes of the Niger belt apparently, and in reference to the Nunuma, a closely connected tribe of the Kassena, M. Tauxier says in reference to sacrifices made before sowing the crops:

"The day following a copious rainfall the head of the compound takes a fowl to his field. If there stands therein a tamarind, a shea-butter or a locust-bean tree he lets the blood of the fowl drop on the tree. If there is none, he lets if fall on the ground. The

sacrifice is offered to the earth and the bush in order to procure a good harvest. The sky or God is also invoked.

" We know that to the mind of the native the tree is firstly a child of the earth, since the latter makes it grow on its breast; secondly a representative of the bush, since the bush is made of grasses, plants, and trees. Therefore to offer a sacrifice to a tree is to offer one at the same time to the earth and to the bush, its two creative divinities. That is why when there is a tree in the field the fowl's blood is poured out for it."

I can find no worship of the bush as such among the tribes in British territory; but there are certainly Earth-gods who inhabit the bush, and these are propitiated or invoked, as the case may be, whenever occasion may arise. For instance, when a new settlement is formed the newly-created *tindana* will not create a new Earth-god, he will merely discover and worship the local deity. As pointed out before, his discovery will be facilitated by the curious physical features in the neighbourhood of his new compound, and confirmed by the result of the usual consultation with the sorcerers. It is noteworthy, too, that the *gawrana* (Nan.), *goatu* (Kass.)—lit., owner of the bush—is appointed by the *tindana*, and loses those portions of the bush which may be settled on later, when they will become either subject to the old *tingani* or to a new one discovered by the founder of the new settlement. This *gawrana* makes sacrifice to the gods of the earth that dwell in the bush, particularly at the time of communal hunting.

The majority of men recognise easily a likely place for an Earth-god to choose as his abode. I remarked this especially on the road south when talking to some Nankanni carriers of mine. We were about half-way between Prang and Attabubu, where the new motor road was being cut through a very thick piece of bush—one of those out-croppings, as it were, of the great

forest. Their sudden silence struck me, and they explained they were afraid of the *tingani* through which we were passing.

An aged tree stood outside the Chief of Navarro's compound. Some years ago it fell down, but nothing was done about it. This year, however, there was great scarcity of rain and the early crop of millet was in danger. The Chief knew not what could be the cause. After many consultations with the sorcerers he learned that the tree was a great Chief of trees, that it required the funeral ceremony of *lare*, which I will describe later. Then was performed with much feasting this mark of esteem to the departed, and the venerable tree was appeased. This was an unusual thing and, so far as I could learn, unique.

Spirits of rivers and water-holes are greatly respected. They are most powerful spirits, too. They can slay men and they can bring much good fortune. To them are brought many sacrifices of fowls and goats, etc. It is said that these spirits live below the river-bed. Their dwelling-places are the same as that of men. People who have been almost drowned say they have seen such places, that before seeing them the spirits turned their faces to the back of the head. It is evident that if one is drowned the spirit is angry. In fact, the man is not drowned at all; he is taken by the river.

I knew a small boy who resembled his grandfather. Later I have written how such children are supposed to be the re-incarnation of the dead they resemble. Being honoured as his grandfather, he was looked on as a man and carried on the profession of sorcerer. This work he took up at the instigation of the spirit of a river which he had visited. His story was that near Po he was overtaken by night, being left behind by his family when travelling to Po. He went to sleep by a stream, and during the night visited the stream's home and was entertained there. Proof positive of the

reality of the stream's spiritual existence! He told about it and drew a picture of how everything in the spiritual world resembled the things on earth. This dream he believed in implicitly.

These spirits will on occasion help one. Often a man wanting a wife asks for their help. The resulting wife is looked on by him as partly owned by the spirit, and he consults it and gives it presents at such important times as that of pregnancy, child-birth, etc.

On crossing the more important rivers many people throw one or two cowries into it, or a little flour or grain, and tell the river what they intend doing, and so procure its assistance or persuade it not to intervene unfavourably. On the return journey, no matter if fortune was good or bad, similar small presents are made and the river informed of the result. And I have noticed that very many natives when swimming rivers in flood carry a small lump of earth from one bank to the other, holding it above the water. The reason given was that thus the river would not harm them ; but the real reason was not disclosed.

Mention has been made of sacred stones which might be the abode of earth-spirits. The most remarkable of these is a bare, almost perpendicular rock-face at Tiana, visible for a great distance. Of lesser stones, the neolithic implements and the old grind-stones have a semi-religious status, and to these must be added the stones used instead of anvils by the blacksmiths. These are called *nari* (Kassena), *nia* (Builsa), and are generally fallen from heaven. Indeed, some are, I believe, meteorites, and such are of great value, costing sometimes as much as three cows. The ordinary *nari*, however, is found in river-beds, is extremely hard, and costs at its cheapest three thousand cowries, approximately three shillings. Sacrifices are made to them, since their spirit is a beneficent one to the blacksmith, for without their aid he could not carry on his labours. Coming from heaven, their weight

forces them through the ground, so usually one has to place a stick between them and the soil when hammering on them, lest one should send them right through the earth. Only blacksmiths may handle them, for they kill other people and bring evil fortune to anyone so foolhardy as to step over them ; and they confer a legal right on their owner to possess any article placed on them.

This deference to a stone necessary to one's trade is common to most tools of a like importance. The wandering troubadour sacrifices to his violin or pipe ; the iron-maker to his furnace ; the hunter to his bow or his gun.

It cannot but be remarked that animals regarded as sacred, especially crocodiles, are generally those that dwell among the haunts of men. Few of the larger watering-places are without one or more of these, and they are invariably sacred. At Wiassi there is a large pool of water. It is full of crocodiles, which may not be harmed. The pool is used for swimming in as well as for drinking water, and the crocodiles do not even trouble to get out of one's way. Presumably this is on the principle of *nemo me impune lacessit.* But in the river near by crocodiles may be, and are, regularly killed, except, of course, by those of the crocodile totem.

A hippopotamus, however, inhabiting a similar pool at Fambissi, was a public nuisance, albeit sacred. It enjoyed spoiling the adjacent farms. I was begged to kill it ; I went to try, and missed it twice. It then refused to show itself for a long while. A couple of the spectators then said they would beg the spirit to come up. They did so and offered up a regular prayer to it to show itself. It did, and I missed it again. The hippopotamus sank once more and, I heard afterwards, moved away from the place.

The cult of the crocodile is commonly met with throughout the Northern Territories. It is not, however, universal. It would seem, though it is

dangerous to generalise, that where the local water supply or fishing-pool is infested with these brutes, there an understanding has been reached between man and animal to leave each other in peace.

On this point M. Tauxier gives several interesting examples among the Nunuma. At Sapia he mentions that the belief is current that a man's soul is not only in him, but also in a crocodile, and that whatever evil came to the latter comes to him, and *vice versa*. At Leo he found, too, the same beliefs.

Animals being alive do not, so far as I could learn, require propitiation. On several occasions men have talked to me of their sacred cows, but in what the sacredness consists I could not discover. A belief, however, in metamorphosis seems universal. Especially can old women change themselves into hyænas, for how otherwise could wild animals come so near to the habitations of men and so fearlessly scrape in the rubbish heaps ? At Iassi exists a family which can change themselves into elephants, and if a man injures them they will, in their elephant guise, trample down his farm. Several have seen this—not the change itself, but the elephants coming from near the compound and proceeding with their work of devastation. Untold wealth would not persuade them to show me the change. Animals, of course, can talk to each other, and certainly understand human speech. No one says he will kill his dog to-morrow if the dog is within hearing, lest it should run away. On the occasion of Peace celebration the Government presented the people with a number of sheep, and by way of amusing their herd I told the sheep they had only one day to live. The shepherd was quite indignant, as he was responsible for their safe keeping, and told me the sheep would try to escape. One did. The shepherd explained it was really my fault. I wonder if he found it to his taste. . . . Again, four lions were causing much loss among the cattle in a part of Builsa country. I

was asked to kill them. I did my best, but never came across them. But, as so frequently happens, no sooner did I leave the country than the lions reappeared there. Obviously they had either heard or been told of my intention.

CHAPTER IV

TOTEM AND MEDICINE

THE subject of animals leads one to the question of totems. In its usually accepted meaning the term is not quite accurate if applied to the customs of these people. Everyone has some animal which is a species of *alter ego*—not to be slain or eaten, an animal which is recognised as one's friend, one's brother. Most noteworthy of these animals is the crocodile, which is called by the Paga people their soul. The life of a man or woman is identical with that of his crocodile, *alter ego*. When he is born the crocodile is born; they are ill at the same time; they die at the same time. It is said that when a man is at the point of death one can hear at night the groaning of his crocodile. These crocodiles congregate chiefly in one large pool and are very numerous. Women and children walk among them without fear to get the water, and the crocodiles are at liberty to take any goat or sheep rash enough to go within reach of their maws.

Other totems are the python, iguana, squirrel, civet, mole-cricket, monkey, green-snake, mouse, partridge, and dog. Some trees are also totems, notably the kapok. It would seem that women have no such totems. They are generally forbidden to eat fowls, dogs, or monkeys. The only reason for this that I could find out was from an old man, who said that if a woman was allowed to eat fowls there would be none left, since they are so easy to catch—an explanation

which I did not take to be serious. Rather do I think it is related to religion. Fowls seem especially reserved for sacrifice, and women take no part in either sacrifices or other religious ceremonies.

M. Tauxier received an answer similar to the one I had. His informant said that the fowl, a sociable and civilised beast, was good for men, whilst the guinea-fowl, an untamed beast, was good for women, who are wild and flighty beings.

A man usually has two totems. One he inherits from his father and the other he obtains at the ceremony of *seem*, a form of baptism which I shall explain later. Occasionally an animal is taken as a totem at the instigation of a sorcerer, who may detect in it the malign influence which has caused the misfortunes that prompted the consultation. For instance, at Pagabru a man slew two leopards. This was an event of no small order. Shortly after several people in his compound died. The sorcerer was visited, and as a result the man learned that the leopard was a totem or, rather, taboo for him. He therefore modelled two clay leopards (he said they were leopards ; I thought they were meant for elephants) outside the gate of his compound and sacrificed to them. Be it noted, again, how the man himself associating the two events—the slaying of the leopards and the death of his relatives—on consulting the sorcerer obtained a reply quite in accordance with his own natural conclusions. In the opposite way, a man whose friends attribute their good fortune to the kindness of their totems will be persuaded to adopt those particular animals. To do so one merely sacrifices a goat or fowl and begs for their protection.

Many of the people believe their dead relatives, particularly female ones, become animals. For this reason the chameleon is an object of great fear. It presages death and all manner of evil as a rule. To kill a totem is a dreadful thing. Death, sickness, mis-

fortune to the household are sure to follow such a deed. Hence come blindness, baldness, shortness of stature ; hence, too, scarcity of rain, for in these parts frequently an abundance falls all round and quite a small area is left dry and unwatered. This year the Chief's section of the Mayoro community had no rain at all for their first crop of millet, whilst everyone else had plenty and harvested an abundance of grain. The sorcerer will, through his stones, make known the cause, and it depends on what the consultant's conscience says as to whether a slain or injured totem be the cause. In the Mayoro case it was a slain totem that had caused the drought.

The origin of these totems is usually traced to some event in the past in which the animal chosen has aided the family. A small boy who joined my household—a Nankanni—had as his main totem the python. It appears that his father was out in the bush with some friends, when they angered a python, which slew them but left him. This was an evident sign of partiality for him on the part of the snake, who thus became the boy's father's totem.

The Chief of Navarro's totem is a crocodile. The family received this in the following manner. Long ago the Kamboin-zono, coming from the south, had chased the Nankanni in a northern direction. One of the invaders was left at Zekko with his wife, because of an injury to his leg. No remedy could heal him. One day, when he was near to dying, a squirrel jumped down from a branch of a tree on to the wound. The Kamboin-zono in his agony cried out, but the pain was relieved almost immediately. He felt sure that he could recover, and sent his wife to go and bring him some water. She took her pot and went in search of it. Finding none, and meeting a crocodile, she ran back to him and told what she had seen. He told her to go back quickly and follow the crocodile, for it would show her where a water-hole would be found. She

went back and, following the crocodile, found a large pond. She filled her water-pot and returned to her husband, who, recovering, built his compound at the place and begot many children. After many generations these fought together, and some were driven from Zekko. These men came and settled in Navarro, retaining the memory of the friendly aid of the crocodile.

At Mayoro I learned how one day a blacksmith went to the bush to kill bush-cows; meeting one, he shot an arrow and wounded it. The bush-cow charged. The blacksmith ran. Seeing an ant-eater's earth he crept in, just escaping the bush-cow. It remained there waiting for him to come out. But, being seriously wounded, it died, and fell on top of the hole. The blacksmith could not push the corpse away and remained imprisoned. A mole-cricket was there also, and began to bore an exit. Through this small orifice a ray of light came to the unfortunate hunter, who enlarged it with his knife and succeeded in extricating himself. Thus the mole-cricket became the totem of the blacksmiths.

On one occasion in Builsa country I shot a monkey in mistake for a leopard. With me were two Builsa hunters who were under the same impression. The animal died in some tall grass, and although both laughed at the mistake, they were not inclined to approach the corpse. When they did so I noticed one spat towards it and one threw a pinch of earth at it. On bringing it back to the camp another Builsa present did the same. I was told it was their brother, and they did not want him to be angry. He had been an evil brother, as he had done much damage in their farms, and now the white man had punished him. Weni had evidently changed him temporarily into the guise of a leopard so that I would shoot.

But just as there are separate stories of the origin of each family, so there are of the totems, and one cannot write down all.

There is a peculiar reverence paid by women to their calabashes. I could not learn much of this. I was told that every woman has a calabash and is rarely seen without carrying one. I know that in Nankanni country a woman takes her calabash to her husband's compound, and if the man wishes to divorce her returns the calabash to her father, who then repays the presents received for her. At Sirigu the *tindana* complained most bitterly to me that a certain man had buried his dead mother's calabash in the *tingani* without his consent. A sacrifice of two white fowls appeased the *tindana*, but I got no explanation as to the calabash.

From what I could gather, the calabash contains some earth from the *tingani* of the girl's mother, or paternal grandmother if the latter is alive, mixed with blood from sacrifices made to it from time to time by both the husband and the woman. Among the Builsa the calabash is often a small basket, decorated sometimes with cowries and made of dyed grasses; among the Kassena—where this custom is not universal—a small pot takes the place of calabash or basket. Women's customs differ apparently from those of the male sex, and one cannot get them to talk so easily as the men. Calabashes seem, too, to be a religious symbol; they are used when freshly prepared to measure the new vaults and graves for the dead.

From the above it will be seen that these people believe in the existence of a soul or spirit in practically everything. Each man has his own opinions. There is no one with sufficient standing or influence to formulate a common doctrine. It is the same with their own souls. A man's soul lives with the body, but can detach itself, retaining the human form. Thus in dreams it can wander about and perform all sorts of deeds, which, after the lapse of time, come to be regarded by the dreamer as deeds really performed—at times rather a complication in court cases. Again, if one meets a man at night and he does not reply to

one's greeting, it is no man, it is a soul. The soul, however, is essential to the body, though the body is not to the soul. Thus it is that a tree, an animal, an evil man can capture the soul and so bring about the body's death. This is learnt through the sorcerer's stones, and sacrifices are made to appease the angry tree or animal or witch. A man is not apparently aware of capturing another's soul, but he is quite prepared to admit the possibility. During the influenza epidemic early in 1919 a woman at Bongo caught many souls in this manner. She admitted that it was quite correct, but she could not control the evil actions of her own soul in doing so. In her turn she consulted the sorcerers, and so learned to appease the evil spirits which had made her soul do wrong. From this belief comes the oft-told story that certain men had eaten others, for such is the expression used of a soul seizing another and thereby causing the death of a man. The soul of a man still living is called *dyoro* (Kassena), *pi-isiga* (Nankanni), *ko* (Builsa) ; dead, it is *kyiru*, and it will go for permanent residence to Salaga, where is the dwelling-place of souls (*kyiru-dyega*). This latter belief is dying out, since many nowadays make the journey to Salaga ; some, however, who have been there claim to have seen the souls of their ancestors and to have been entertained by them. Is not this still a trace of some Ashanti connection ? The entry to this abiding-place can only be procured after the funeral customs have been observed, and no distinction is made between the evil-doers and the righteous.

En passant, the Paga people call their *alter ego* crocodile their *dyoro*, or soul. The explanation given is that the friendship and mutual assistance and co-existence warrant such an appellation. This is very, very similar to the Ashanti calling *agyinamoa*, the house-cat, by the name *wokra*, or soul.

To these dead souls sacrifices are frequently made and prayers offered, asking for help in obtaining

prosperity, wives, children, and deflecting evil, sickness, and death. The soul is represented by clay pyramids, generally outside the compounds.

The worship of ancestors is by far the most important cult for the individual, just as the worship of the Earth-gods is for the community. A religious man —or an over-superstitious one, according to how one chooses to regard the matter—will do nothing without a sacrifice of some sort, generally a fowl, to his ancestors. In every compound is the mound representative of the founder's grave, and outside are the small pyramids representative of other deceased members of the household. Each of these is capped with a stone, and thereon are placed blood and feathers from the sacrifices. And when a family migrates, earth from them is taken to the new abode, and the sacrifices continue.

To resume, then, the religion of these people consists in the belief in many gods of the earth, who are sometimes beneficent, sometimes maleficent. Usually they are kind, but if neglected their wrath soon brings their subjects to obedience. After the Earth-gods are the great gods which control rain, thunder, lightning, and wind—gods whose waywardness and unreliability would seem to have discouraged a cult of the extent of that of the earth, but whose importance is as great. There follow innumerable spirits, whose character and whose requirements are for the individual to learn—spirits of rivers, trees, animals, stones, etc., and who affect the community only so much as they are of use to it, as, for example, the communal watering-place; evil spirits to be slain or appeased or averted by charms, and whose abiding-place is unknown and, like them, fugitive; and, lastly, the spirits of the ancestors —spirits which, by their very nature, are more for the individual than for the country at large. Classified thus, one cannot but remark the vicious circle of the religion. The dead return to the earth, impregnate

the earth, as it were, with their essence, and so earth and the dead become inextricably mixed. The native would seem to recognise this—nearly always when drinking, a little of the liquid is first poured on the ground for the earth and for the dead. But this is theorising, and is as yet a useless occupation.

With the belief that spiritual agents are the cause of misfortune and sickness, it follows that medical treatment consists generally in charms. There are certain men considered most proficient in the curative art. These are the *liri-tina* (Kassena), *tiindana*[1] (Nankanni), *tinyam* (Builsa), (owner of medicine). Their medicines are drawn from the bush, and are usually bitter-tasting grasses, herbs; and barks. For poultices the same herbs are used mixed with shea-butter and charcoal and ashes. Usually they are covered with cow-dung. It is said that the stronger the smell the more easily will the evil spirit causing the sickness be driven away. The cure complete, the doctor is called to his patient's house and regaled with food and *pito* (the local beer made from guinea-corn or millet). The doctor drinks first some *pito*, spits on the remains of the medicine, eats a little and spits that also thereon. The medicine is then thrown on the *tampori* (all languages), *i.e.*, the midden in front of the compound. This ceremony performed, the late patient is free to eat of the various meats which had been forbidden him during his sickness.

At Navarro there is a *liri-tina* who excels in setting broken limbs and dislocations. A dog of mine fell from the top of my house and, I thought, put out its thigh. I could not get it back, and, hearing of the man, asked him to do it for me. He took a stick and a stone, both of which he mysteriously searched for in the fields around, and placing the stone over the swelling, tapped it with the stick, calling on the *kyiru*

[1] *Tiindana*=*tiin*, medicine; *dana*, owner of. *Tindana*=*teng*, earth; *dana*, owner of.

which had caused the trouble to let the dog go. He then threw the stick and stone away. It cured the dog; but there is only my word for it that the leg was dislocated, and I know nothing of such things.

Once my interpreter was hit by a poisoned arrow. The local *liri-tina* would not come. He was too afraid of a general fight, since the war-cry had been raised. He supplied the antidote, however, but I could not learn of what it was composed. The procedure was as follows. The wound was in the left leg just below the knee-cap, the poison strophanthus. The arrow had pierced in about three-quarters of an inch and took me several seconds to extract. The man was made to sit down. His neck was cut in three places, but not so as to draw blood, and the skin between the fingers was treated likewise. The wound was then beaten with the flat of a knife, and after a little blood had flowed the medicine—a black sort of paste—was applied and a draught of some concoction given. My interpreter was then allowed to walk back to the camp, but he could not pass any locust-bean tree—a difficult piece of navigation, as they were practically the only trees about—and the offending arrow had to be carried behind him. This was important, as it showed the arrow who was master. The man lived.

In addition the point of the arrow was blunted or bent. This would seem a custom analogous to that of biting the thorn that has entered one's flesh—a custom which seems common to everyone in the Gold Coast.

On another occasion one of my constables was bitten badly by a crazy dog—driven crazy by hunger, and not one suffering from rabies. The remedy was simple. The fangs were drawn, burnt, pounded up and drunk.

Charms exist for nearly everything. Hunters carry them to protect them from every imaginable disaster.

An old Kassena at Kayoro who used frequently to take me hunting went out covered with them. When appearing in my Court nearly everyone would carry a charm or mascot to obtain a verdict or to protect them when lying. These are to be obtained from *liri-tina*, but generally from itinerant quacks. The latter are especially good at making charms to procure evil for another, particularly if one can obtain something belonging to him on whom one wishes misfortune to fall. On one occasion an old man had lost his wife, and hearing to whose house she had been lured, he came to me. I told him to see the Chief and come back. This evidently did not suit him, so I asked why he was afraid of the Chief. He said he wasn't afraid of any Chief—he was as good a man as they ; but if he went into the neighbourhood of the man who had stolen his wife he would be sure to leave a footprint behind, and the man would make " medicine " from the earth so impressed and cause him harm. It is not often that one meets with such openness.

Again, if one wishes to make a woman barren one has merely to take the loin-string, to which leaves are attached, of an old woman and place it beneath the hearth-stones. As it dries, so will dry the womb of the woman one wishes to harm, provided that one calls on the spirit of the old woman to assist. Or one can take the string and place it in a prepared hole in a tree. As the tree grows and holds the string fast, so will the womb be held fast. A proper medicine, however, is a drink of water in which copper or brass filings have been kept for a long time. The women themselves fear the pains of child-birth, and although children are greatly desired by their men, they will try sometimes to avoid these pains by dancing and running and drinking the extraction of astringent roots in the hope that children will not be born. A barren woman is not necessarily despised. One would not knowingly marry such unless one could afford no better and were

hard pressed for a housewife. But after marriage they are left alone, though kept in the house, since women are a sign of wealth and are useful in the work of the household. No man, however, dare insult them by flinging their barrenness in their face.

Great power is associated with tails. I don't know why. Elephant and lion tails are of great value. A horse tail is the sign of a big man ; cow tails are useful fly-whisks ; but the donkey tail is the " medicine " *par excellence* of the professional thieves. In an over-populated country such as these two Districts, where men are loth to detach themselves from the land of their fathers, it frequently happens that a child is orphaned of near relatives and neglected by those who out of charity have sheltered him. Such a child usually develops into a thief. Others are professional thieves by inclination, or, rather, by the will and influence. of spirits. One and all seem to possess a donkey's tail. Before setting out on a predatory expedition the thief begs the tail for help and then ties the hair into a simple knot. He then sets out, and if on his return the knot has not untwisted itself he is sure of non-discovery. It is not so easy as it seems to tie a knot in a donkey's tail.

CHAPTER V

JUSTICE

PERJURY is common in Court. It is more than common—it is invariably practised. There is no means of preventing this for there is no binding oath. It is usual for all these natives to swear their story is true by calling on the Earth-spirit to slay them after eating a pinch thereof. But such an oath is no more binding than a statement prefaced by the French expression, "*Par bleu.*" The Earth-spirit has no power over a native not belonging to that particular community whose earth is eaten. Thus a Zuaragu man could eat any quantity of Bolgatanga earth and swear by it as much as he liked; he has nothing to fear. And in the case of one falsely swearing on his own earth he protects himself by sacrifice, if he is a most timid man, or by charms or by the simple device of muttering a recantation inaudible to the Court. The reason for this is not far to seek. Before the coming of the white man there were no Courts. Disputes were settled *en famille* or on the field of battle. They still often are. Living more or less closely together, and not being able to make a far journey, everyone knew the facts of the dispute, and it resolved itself into a matter for the old men to decide. This mode of life not only accounts for continuous perjury, but explains also the inability of the people to understand or answer questions. In Court a man merely makes a statement, "So-and-so has stolen my cows," or some such allegation, and relapses into silence, and only with great difficulty can one learn any details. In fact, one

cannot offhand even learn the complainant's name. Here is a verbatim report of the opening of a complaint which I amused myself with transcribing :

Commissioner : Are there any complaints ?

Court Interpreter (going to the door) : Who wishes to see Commissioner ? (No answer.) Has anyone here a complaint to make ? (No answer.) The white man is going to his house. Do you wish to see him ?

There are plenty of obvious complainants sitting outside. The Commissioner rises, and then all come in at once. The Interpreter seizes one and places him in front of the Commissioner, who sits down again.

Commr. : Well, what is your complaint ?

Intpr. : Speak.—*Plaintiff* : I wish to see the Commissioner.

Intpr. : Speak.—*P.* : I wish to see the Commissioner.

Intpr. : Speak.—*P.* : I wish to see——

Intpr. : Speak.—*P.* : Eh ?

Intpr. : Tell the Commissioner what you want.—*P.* : I wish to see him.

Commr. to Intpr. : What is it all about ?

Intpr. : I don't know.—*Commr.* : Be quick and find out.

Intpr. : Speak ; the white man is getting angry.—*P.* : They have stolen my cows.

Intpr. : Who has stolen your cows ?—*P.* : They have.

Intpr. : Who have ?—*P.* : Men.

Intpr. : What men ?—*P.* : The thieves.

Intpr. : What are their names ?—*P.* : Whose names ?

Intpr. : The thieves' names.—*P.* : Does the white man want to know the names of the thieves ?

Intpr. : Yes.—*P.* : Oh ! (Relapses into silence.) . . . Why does he want to know their names ?

Intpr. : He is a white man.—*P.* : Ah ! I will tell him the names of the thieves.

Intpr.: Be quick. The white man will get angry. —*P.*: The white man will get angry. I will tell him the names of the thieves.

The Commissioner has heard all about the complaint before, and now begins to put direct questions, all of which are answered as above. Eventually the man is persuaded to speak out and is asked his name.

P.: My name?

Intpr: Yes, your name.—*P.*: Ah! The white man wants to know my name?

Intpr.: Yes.—*P.*: Akugli.

Intpr.: Is that your name?—*P.*: Yes; Akugli.

Intpr.: Your proper name?—*P.*: My proper name?

Intpr.: Yes.—*P.*: Akugli is my father. He is dead.

Intpr.: No, No! The Commissioner wants to know your proper name.

Plaintiff now is silent for some time, and then says, "Oh, my proper name!" etc., etc.

This inability to answer questions arises, I fancy, from the impatience of the people. Everyone knows his name and everyone knows who stole, or more probably detained, the cows. In fact, everyone knows all about it. The Chiefs, who are being encouraged to hear the troubles of their own people, are equally cognisant of the facts and swearing is unnecessary. However, in cases of theft or disputes as to women resource is often had to ordeals, though our influence is bringing this custom gradually to an end. These are many, and vary from the most harmless to the most harmful. Of the former, a good example is that of the locust-bean leaves. These are laid over each other in alternately facing layers. The suspected is asked to draw them apart slowly. If he does so he is not guilty, but if he cannot he is presumed guilty. It is a curious fact that sometimes these leaves require a considerable exertion to pull apart. The most

serious is undoubtedly a poison which the two parties are required to drink. It is generally feared, but innocent people are invariably quite ready to drink it. In this case charms are worn as antidotes, and usually the Chief sees that these are removed. A third is somewhat interesting. It is known as *possiga* (Nankanni), and is kept by a special man, *possigarana*. The suspected or disputants are stripped and their stomachs smeared with shea-butter. *Possigarana* seats himself and takes a small earthen pot, into which he places some kapok cotton. This he stirs with a grass stem taken from his sleeping mat. He calls on the spirit of *possiga* to come, and after mysterious passes sets fire to the cotton. He seizes the pot and quickly places it over his own stomach, likewise smeared with the grease. A vacuum is caused and the skin is drawn into the pot. After a while *possigarana* begs the spirit to leave him and takes the pot off. He then goes through the same performance and places the pot on the bellies of the suspected. *Possiga* will not hold a guiltless man. *Possigarana* will not remove it from the one whose stomach is held, but tells all the spectators to go away and leave him till he confesses. In Builsa country the ordeal principally used is that of boiling shea-butter into which one has to plunge one's arm and extract a ring.

The ordeal by poison (*dongo* or *yaba tiin*) is an institution throughout the Dagomba, Mamprussi, and Moshi countries. It probably consists of a concoction from sass-wood, but certainly has earth from the *tingani*, blood and water. The people looked on it as an infallible test and endued with supernatural power. It is usually fatal, but not immediately. Cases in which this test would be used could not have been very numerous. The name of the poisonous bark sometimes used is *lamziri*. Roots which cross paths are also considered to have the desired effect.

Crime is classified by the relation of the criminal to

the victim. There were no degrees in wrong-doing. Death was the common penalty for murder, theft, or adultery, provided the two principal parties were of different communities. It mattered not if the prisoner was the actual offender or not; if he was a relative, it was enough. For no man could escape from liability for wrong committed by one of his blood. It was not always possible to catch a criminal or one of his relations; the injured family then awaited an opportunity to retaliate in kind, either murder, theft, or rape. Difficult indeed was it for the old men to restrain their angry youths. To-day, of course, times are changing, but these old thoughts of rudimentary justice still obtain and often are put into practice.

As for civil wrongs, none could exist, except between members of the same community. No man trusted one of another community. Marriage was usually by rape or purchase, or with a remote family connection. Except in the markets, one did not meet with other men; and markets were all in a peculiar position, being under the direct control of an Earth-god. Violations of his wishes were punishable religiously—sometimes a community would be, so to speak, excommunicated from all intercourse in the markets, and all other communities saw to it that the order of the market *tindana* was obeyed. The need for the market's existence necessitated the need for the observance of its freedom from disturbance—an idea which in course of time seems to have evolved into that of a League of Nations.

But civil wrongs between members of the same community did exist. A cow belonging to A might eat the skin which B had discarded while farming; or, again, A might beat B's children for not tending the sheep properly and allowing them to stray into A's field. In time of famine A might have agreed to sell his growing crops in exchange for food or some sheep to B, and B might not have finished the payment

A would sometimes kill one of B's guinea-fowls in mistake for one of his own. If tempers grew too heated, then resource was had to arms, and only the *tindana* could fix matters in conjunction with the old men. But if prudence prevailed the old men settled the trouble amicably. Trivial matters such as these led to emigration and to the founding of new communities.

Serious crime between members of the same community was not rare. Adultery and murder polluted the earth and the *tindana* adjudicated. He gave the accuser and accused a concoction to drink of which the chief compound was some earth from the *tingani*. If this was a poison at all, it was a very mild one, but it was of great superstitious worth. To partake thus by fiction of the Earth-god himself in order to support a lie was to endanger the whole community from that god's anger. Other crimes, such as killing by witchcraft and stealing, were investigated by the old men. (Hence *yaba tiin*—medicine of the old men.) If one denied the crime one could drink the poison, and in a day or two a swelling body would testify to one's guilt, and a little later death would prove the veracity of its evidence. On the other hand, if one confessed one's guilt, a slayer by witchcraft, a man who had cast a spell over another's person or property, would merely be warned not to do so again, and he would then go and beg the Earth-god to help him turn from his evil path. A thief, too, would be lightly treated for his first two offences, but on the third occasion he lost his eyes, boiling shea-butter being used for that purpose. The immunity of the self-confessed witches was due apparently to the principle that a man was not responsible for the actions of his *alter ego* if he himself disapproved of them—a curious argument when the liability for a relative's transgressions was always recognised. Thieves could ransom themselves from undergoing the penalty of their misdeeds, but the price was heavy.

To-day, although not twenty years have elapsed since our first coming, but fourteen since white men were stationed at Navarro and only nine at Zuaragu, all this is fast changing. Ordeal by poison must be rare, for every thief knows that by confessing to his Chief he will be brought to the white man. Innocent people being slain for witchcraft may take place on occasions. Assaults and similar offences are to everyone's knowledge the affairs for white men to hear and decide. The result is an increase in thefts, a decrease in deeds of violence.

Civil wrongs have multiplied and tend to great complications. There is in all cases the difficulty, amounting almost to impossibility, of hearing or obtaining the true details of the crime or wrong. But the most important cases, and the most serious, are those dealing with the ownership of land. More often than not blood is shed over this question of land tenure, which I will endeavour to treat in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

LAND TENURE

LAND tenure is always a subject not only of absorbing interest, but of paramount importance. The question of communal ownership of lands is one that has been much discussed and written about in the Gold Coast, and it has come to be accepted generally that the communal system obtains among the coast and forest tribes, a generalisation which, like all generalisations, is very much open to dispute. Thus in the south, with the advent of a great wealth-producing and permanent crop—cocoa—the question has arisen in its acutest form. The former Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Hugh Clifford, in an article in *Blackwood's* for January, 1918, thus summarises the position as it has become to-day:

"Theoretically, all land belongs to the tribe, though, as we have seen, the family which planted a temporary food-patch was regarded as having a certain right to the fruits of its collective labour. This was a system which it was very natural for a people to evolve whose culture did not include any save shifting cultivation. The introduction of agriculture of a permanent character was to them, however, an extraordinary revolution, entailing a change not merely of degree but of kind. If the land belonged to the tribe, and the fruits which labour wrung from it to the tiller of it, when the occupation by the latter ran into a long period of years, instead of lasting only for a season or so, what became of the communal property

in the soil? The Twi-speaking native States are governed on very democratic principles, which include the right of the people to depose a Chief if his personal or public conduct does not meet with their approval. The position of the planter of a cocoa-garden *vis-à-vis* the tribe was a matter in which the popular will supported the individual, as against the community, for very soon the vast majority of the tribesmen were themselves the planters of cocoa-gardens. Immemorial custom might say one thing, but immediate and personal interests said another, and that in tones that would take no denial. Accordingly, though the theory of the communal ownership of all land stands as four square as ever, in practice the property of the individual in his cocoa-trees is fully recognised, and it passes on his death to his next-of-kin with the rest of his personal effects."

For long now this communal system has been recognised as the correct one. To enter into a discussion here would not only be futile but not even to the point. The fact remains, however, that by immemorial custom, so long as the land was occupied by an individual, so long was it considered his against all comers. The untilled bush was roughly divided into spheres of influence for hunting or snail-collecting purposes by the community, but any member thereof was at liberty to mark out, clear and farm whatever portion he might require, and, once in use, that land was his till he abandoned it. Moreover, when left only for a short time to recuperate its powers, it still was his, and should anyone particularly require it, he could only do so by obtaining the owner's, *i.e.*, the clearer's, consent.

In the bush away from our influence—somewhat difficult to find nowadays such a place—that is the custom to-day. In the Ashanti forest in the Western Province is a District known as Ahafo, perhaps the least touched of all Districts by the white man. There

the rights of the clearer of the land hold good against all men so long as he is in occupation, and when he consents for another to farm thereon, the palm-wine trees and the kola—gifts of God and not sown by him—belong to him and not to the man to whom he has lent the land.

The permanency of a village necessarily entails individual ownership of the farm lands. This is but a corollary of what Sir J. G. Frazer says in his " Folk-lore in the Old Testament " :

" Permanent occupation is essential to individual ownership ; it is not essential to communal or tribal ownership. And as in human history, the herdsman and the migrating husbandman precede the settled life of the farmer under the more advanced systems of tillage, it seems to follow that individual ownership of land has been developed later than communal or tribal ownership, and that it cannot be recognised by law until the ground is under permanent cultivation. In short, common lands are older than private lands, and the transition from communal to private ownership of the soil is associated with a greatly improved mode of tillage, which in its turn, like all economic improvements, contributes powerfully to the general advance of society."

There is, then, a graduated scale in the Gold Coast in this ownership of lands. On the coast one had a temporary individual ownership, cleaning and occupation being the test ; further inland, the individual owner, after abandoning the use of his land for daily requirements, retained, by reason of his labour in cleaning it, rights in the valuable tree products which Nature planted for him ; and lastly, in the open country of the north, one has private property much as we know it in our own country. The overcrowded state of the land demanded permanency in cultivation ; the nature of the crops permits of almost continuous cultivation ; the religious beliefs of the people made it

impossible to desert the rights and property of their dead;[1] the Chiefs of alien stock submitted to these beliefs and have never dared to interfere with them, but rather themselves follow the customs of the people they rule.

I have before endeavoured to explain how a new settlement is made. The Earth-gods naturally demand propitiation. It is hard indeed to farm up in the north. Crops do not grow so abundantly nor so regularly as in the forest. Manuring is necessary; and the shortness of the season precludes a man from continually making new farms. Hard work will not necessarily give a bountiful harvest; but hard work is necessary to live.

The settler, by virtue of his receiving the new land from the nearest *tindana*, learns where the Earth-god of his locality resides. He will vaguely own an indefinite amount of land until a newcomer joins him. To him land in turn is allocated, and the process continues until a new *tingani* is discovered, requiring a *tindana* of its own. And, once the land is given, it is given in perpetuity. The only remnant of the *tindana's* former ownership is the tithe paid annually, a basket of guinea-corn or millet, which the farmer renders to the *tindana*. The total of these tithes is exchanged for a sheep or a cow, and this is sacrificed at the *tingani* to the Earth-god, the whole community attending.

The *tindana* has therefore gradually become what is to all intents and purposes a high priest. He is between them and their local deity; he is on behalf of the latter the caretaker of the land, for he alone can propitiate the earth when blood is wantonly shed or vile crime pollutes the purity of the life-giving soil.

It will be seen, then, that the Chief is as regards the land no better than his subjects. Being Chief he owns, or rather owned, more workers and therefore required and was able to cultivate more ground.

To-day, as the authority of the Chief, *i.e.*, the political head of the people, increases, so does the power of the *tindana* wane. In this custom of land tenure we have the explanation of the oft-heard saying, "Chiefs command people, not the land"—a saying frequently used when land questions are brought before the white man.

In Nankanni I found some discrepancies as to the ownership of the trees. At Biung, near Zuaragu, the locust-bean trees were claimed by the *tindana* of Biung; and generally shea-butter trees in Talansi country belonged to the Chiefs. But in these parts the confusion of *tindanas* and Chiefs is extraordinarily complex, and not made easier by claims of suzerainty by the Chief of Kologu. This has arisen from several causes: our interference and pacification of lawless and independent tribes; the subsequent restitutionand, in many instances, creation of Chiefships and their authority; the natural revolution which law and order brought in their train. But, as a matter of fact, it is evident that either the trees belonged to the farmer or the *tindana*. In Kassena and Builsa the farmer owns them out and out, no matter what species they may be. In the ordered Dagomba and Mamprussi country the locust-bean belongs to the Chief, who, as I have shown, is the substitute for the *tindana* by right of conquest. But—and this exception is of great importance—where the trees are on farm lands, then they belong to the farmer. Be it noted, too, that the question relates to the locust-bean tree—other trees are not troubled about—and this great food-producing tree is from all evidences not indigenous to the country. Hence it would seem to be conclusive that the land, and with it the trees, are privately owned by the farmer who has received them from the *tindana*. The Chief is not consulted; but it is obvious that an unwelcome stranger would not be allowed to settle on the land.

The bush is wild and uninhabited, save by evil spirits and the Earth-gods. The latter are appeased by the *tindana*, or, if he has too large a country to look after, by his delegate, the *gawrana*. It belongs in theory to the nearest *tindana*, and until our advent disputes anent its ownership did not arise. To-day the young men care not for the Earth-gods, and take what bush they please for their new farms, consulting neither *tindana* nor Chief.

Once the land is allocated, it passes from the control or care of the *tindana*. Here arises much trouble. The theory of the ownership is simple, but in practice it becomes most complex. Obviously land can never be sold. To do so is to place the Earth-god, as it were; in servitude. I once made the suggestion of sale, and this was most carefully explained by the old men, who had heard my blasphemous proposal. But if it cannot be sold, it may be leased. In the absence of deeds or other documents, and in the failure to understand the meaning of time, disputes must arise in abundance. The original parties to the contract are long dead, yet the grandchildren remember the contract; and often, owing to some quarrel maybe, the offspring of the owner will endeavour to eject the offspring of the tenant. In practice, occupation is proof presumptive of ownership, but in the native mind merely serves to aggravate the dispute. One could give innumerable examples.

This leasing of land arises usually when a family or compound finds its numbers have decreased and the whole amount of the land is no longer required; and again, on the migration of a household, rather than have the trouble to return to till the old lands, they will often lend the use of them to a friend. In the majority of cases the trees are reserved to the lessor. In both cases the retention of the lands is due to the belief that either one day the family will increase in numbers or return once more and so require them.

But a sub-letting is not tolerated. So far as I could learn, that has never taken place; once the lessee no longer wishes for the land it reverts at once to its owner.

There seems no rule as to notice of ejectment, and a man likes to put in his claim at the moment most opportune for himself, regardless of the loss of labour to his tenant. In old days many were the battles fought on this account; to-day resort is now and then had to the bow and arrows, but gradually the people are learning that peace and security are better than continual bloodshed and uncertainty.

A case at Arabe may be of interest. One A of Sawgni represented a family who had settled in Arabe, receiving the land from the *tindana*. Sickness and misfortune caused them to move to Sawgni, but they continued to farm round the ruins of their home at Arabe. A's father then allowed B to farm over the old site and reserved some land near a stream not far from the ruins. A's father and B died. A continued to farm this small bit, but, finding it too much for him, allowed B's son to use it. All went well for some time until a piece of ill-fortune came to A, who consulted the sorcerers. He learnt that to appease the evil spirit it was necessary to plant guinea-corn on the patch at Arabe. So A repaired to his friend, but the latter had already consulted the sorcerers as to what to plant there, and they had let him know that millet should be the crop. He therefore refused to listen to A. A then sought to eject him.

There is a curious exception to all these rules of land tenure. Tobacco in the dry season may be grown anywhere, and the owner of the land does not care at all. This is quite extraordinary; tobacco is a valuable plant and requires most careful culture. I was told that tobacco was not food, and the land was not in use at the time when it is planted, nor did anyone ever trouble about plants which were not food.

As for pasture land, the bush is ownerless and free to everyone. For obvious reasons one will not drive one's cattle too far away, although in the dry season the children will take them several miles down to the rivers' edges. Among the compounds are several strips of pasture land, and these are used freely by all compounds neighbouring to them ; but the land itself is generally owned and merely lying at rest.

Other than tobacco-growing, which seems certainly to be an introduced industry, there is perfect freedom to take honey from anyone's trees. The only reservation is from those trees close to a man's compound. One would have to be very democratic to tolerate that.

And as in pasture, the women of neighbouring compounds are free to cut the grass in damp places, from which they make salt. Salt or potash is essential to these people and is obtained locally from three sources: by burning the guinea-corn stalks, *nakia* (Nankanni), by burning a special grass called *jim* (Nankanni), and by digging up the clay from cattle salt-licks. This last earth is called *serego* (Nankanni).

M. Tauxier summarises the question of land tenure among the neighbouring French tribes thus :

"*En résumé*, the free bush here belongs to the village, but when land has once been cleaned it belongs definitively to the compound which has cleaned it. The latter can lend it or give it."

The laws of inheritance add confusion to the land laws from our point of view when questions arise in practice. Just as the compound in general owns land, so does each individual member thereof. When one has accomplished the task expected of one by the family, one can spend the spare time as one will, and often this is passed in farming. The result is that on a man's death there arise two rules of inheritance, since he has interests in two kinds of property—compound property and private property. His interests in the former revert to the head of the family—if he is

himself head, to the eldest male in the male line. His interests in the latter to his sons, or, failing them, to his brothers; and the subdivision of his private lands is frequently the cause of much trouble.

From the above it will be seen that communal holding of land is no longer known. The cleaner of land becomes *ipso facto* the owner for all time; and his original title is based on his religious practices, the request for the land from the caretaker or agent of the Earth-god. The rules apply alike to the Chief as to the poor man; the latter is guarded in his holding from the former's rapacity or covetousness by religious fears; the former admits by submitting to the rules his dependence on the goodwill of the local deity, nor does he yet try to alter them lest thereby he jeopardise his harvest and so bring face to face with starvation his family and himself.

CHAPTER VII

BIRTH AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

THESE are all matters of religion or allied to such. As a matter of fact, the whole of life is one long wrestle with evil spirits, from the time when a woman first discovers herself to be pregnant till the time of death.

When a woman is long before she conceives, the husband goes to the sorcerer to find out what is the cause of the delay. Sometimes it will be the mother or the grandmother or an ancestor who is angry because no sacrifice has been made to them, and so they prevent the wife's pregnancy. Sometimes it is the Earth-god or other spirit who is persecuting him, as they require a goat, a cow, etc.

Some men have a medicine to procure pregnancy. The most well-known of these was one who lived in the Tong Hills. Many men and women used to go to him for the necessary charm. It consisted of the mixture of roots and earth from these hills. However, it was not always effectual. But I rather believe the Earth-god of Tinzugu, the community in the hills, was the real agent.

The woman will sometimes offer herself to an animal with the promise of giving it a goat, or a sheep, or a cow in exchange for a child.

Although the souls of the dead go to *kyirudyega*, nevertheless, in some cases the dead are re-born in infants. For instance, if a child dies soon after birth, and the next one is of the same sex, it is believed

that the dead child has returned. Again, if a child resembles his father or his grandfather, they say that he is really his father or grandfather. Great care is taken of him, and he is honoured as much as his father.

To recognise the dead in a new-born infant there are many signs. The most common are as follows: On the death of an infant the grave-diggers make a small mark with ashes on his cheek or on his forehead, and when this child is born again he will have the same mark on his forehead or cheek. Others, instead of marking the child with ashes, fold his little finger, and when he is re-born his little finger is bent.

As soon as it is known in the compound that one of the young wives is pregnant for the first time, the following ceremony is made, named, in Kassena, *ling puga*. Until one is certain, naturally it cannot be performed, since one might thereby cause a miscarriage. The head of the compound takes a hen or a guinea-fowl, and goes to the sorcerer to ask him what *kadikwa* (*i.e.*, a woman who is the sister or the kinswoman of the husband whose wife is pregnant) he must call for this ceremony. On learning her name he tells her secretly that she has been chosen.

The *kadikwa* then goes at nightfall to the house, and enters quietly so that the pregnant woman is unaware of her arrival. At dawn the *kadikwa* gets up, takes a pinch of ash, and goes to the entrance of the pregnant woman's hut. She then calls her, and as soon as she comes out the *kadikwa* blows the ash in her face, and says, "*A pire mo*," which means, "I know you are pregnant; you cannot hide it from me any longer." A woman of the compound then gives the *kadikwa* a special string (black thread or black straw) with which she girds the belly of the pregnant woman. She takes off all the pregnant woman's bracelets and ornaments and puts them on herself, and has the right to wear them for some time.

Before letting the *kadikwa* go home, the head of

the compound again goes to the sorcerer to ask him if she may. If the answer is in the affirmative he returns to the compound, and tells the pregnant woman to grind some corn and give it to the *kadikwa*, and himself gives her a guinea-fowl, so that on her return to her home her husband can make a sacrifice to his ancestors.

After this ceremony, the husband of the pregnant woman takes a hen and a guinea-fowl, and goes to the house of his father-in-law to notify him of the happy event. The father-in-law then accompanies his son-in-law to the sorcerer's house in order to find out what persons will be " taboo " to the pregnant woman, and these the pregnant one is forbidden to see during her pregnancy under pain of miscarriage. These persons generally are her own mother and sister.

Some men at the time of delivery go to the sorcerer in order to find out what sacrifice is required by the spirits for a prompt delivery. If it is laborious, many sacrifices are made and many sorcerers consulted, and the woman is also given a medicine to ease her. This is ordinarily a concoction from the roots of some trees. Sometimes roots which cross paths are taken and given the woman to drink. These roots hindering the running of the water have for them the power of facilitating the delivery. *Contraria contrariis curantur.* It is noteworthy that similar roots are often placed in the ordeal potion.

Among these people almost every woman is a midwife, and men are very seldom called for this work. There are exceptions only when the infant has to be drawn out by force. Five or six men in Navarro are specialists in this case.

If the child is a male the mother must remain in her room during three days ; if a female she must remain four days, because, the woman being very weak, it is feared that a man having the evil eye, and looking at her, would cause her a serious sickness, or a spirit passing by would cast a spell over her. At this time,

too, if the woman is obliged to go out of the compound for her needs, she must put some ash below her navel. The ash, being white, has the power to make known those who have the evil eye, or those who throw spells, and so helps to prevent their evil doings.

During pregnancy the mother must not eat cold food, fresh meat, ground-nuts, or anything that is rich or succulent, lest the child become too big and the delivery difficult. Honey especially is dangerous, and in their language they say, "Honey drinks the fœtus." At this time the mother sleeps always on the right or the left side. She must not turn over on the ground, for that would cause the navel-string to twist itself round the neck of the infant, so when she wishes to change her side for sleeping she has perforce to get up. Sexual intercourse is not forbidden, but dancing and running are. After delivery the mother must not drink cold water, she must put ash in her soup for a month or so. The woman is called during this time *ka-songo*.

Women have generally intercourse with a man only after two years, because they are convinced if they become pregnant again before the children can eat native food they will die.

A mother is not regarded as unclean, but after the delivery her husband often refuses to eat food made by her because of the blood which might get therein. Before being readmitted to society, *i.e.*, after three days if it is a male child, and four days a female child, there is a small ceremony. The leaves of a plant called by the natives *kmaghla* are taken and boiled. When the extract is tepid, they pour it on the mother's head. She can then go out of the compound.

During the pregnancy of his wife a man must not perform work considered unclean. For instance, he must not help bury the dead. The smell of the dead, with which he would become impregnated, would cause a miscarriage to his wife.

Immediately after delivery the mother is given tepid water with red pepper and flour to drink, and her body and the body of the infant are washed. For about eight days the mother eats only guinea-corn, not millet. The child is anointed twice a day with shea-butter. The first and second day the infant sucks another woman's milk until it is known that the mother's milk is good. This is learned by putting in it a small ant, and if it dies the milk is not good. The purity of the milk is also known by placing in the mother's milk a pod of the locust-bean. I don't know the test. If the milk is bad, the woman herself makes a concoction from another tree and drinks it. The child is given much water every day in the first three or four days after the delivery, water in which guinea-corn has been boiled. Later a kind of grass named *tyellatyega* is boiled, and he drinks that till the ceremony called *seem* is performed.

The after-birth is placed in a small water-jug which has a hole in the bottom and buried in the *tampuri*. The broom with which they gather up the after-birth and the blood of the mother is taken by her on her return to society, and, at the first cross-roads on the path leading to her father's house, is placed in the form of a cross when it is a girl, and in the form of a T when it is a boy, and in the centre of this cross she breaks a fragment of a water-jug.

They cut the navel-string about two inches from the belly of the infant, and when some blood remains at the cutting of the navel-string this blood is put in the mouth of the child, for it is his life, they say. The mother then takes the navel-string and twists it round her finger three times when it is a boy and four times when the infant is a girl. The string left with the body of the infant dries up and falls down. The mother then places it in the shell of a shea-nut, and places this in the wall of her room, generally over the entrance. Thus she keeps count of all her children.

The child is given a name, generally by the head of the compound, the grandmother and the father. The names are borrowed from different circumstances of native life or from events occurring at the time of the birth. The most common are Ada for a man and Kada for a woman; Apuri, Kapuri, given on account of the death of the preceding child; Atyana (*tyana*, moon), Katyana, for children born on the first day of the moon; Awia, Kawia (*wia*, sun), born during the daytime; Adum, Kadum (*dum*, sowing-time), born at seed-time; Abuga, Kabuga (*buga*, river), born when the mother has gone to the river to fetch water; Ane, Kane (*ne*, feet), born feet first. Others, again, are named Awe (*We*, God), Fella (white man), Tigura (war), Kwora (thorn), Tangwam (the sacred grove), Tanga (earth), etc., etc.

There is no particular rule about naming a child after its parents or grandparents, except when it resembles them, when it will bear their name.

The ceremony of *seem* (Kassena), *dawbasi* (Nankanni), *yamba* (Mossi), mentioned before, takes place when the child is about two years old, the parents meeting together to fix the time. When something unusual takes place, illness or death, is often the occasion of this ceremony. It consists in the consecration of the infant to a totem or to an ancestor.

The head of the compound or the father takes a hen and goes to the sorcerer to ask him what totem or ancestor desires to take the child under his care. On his return home he relates all he has learned of the requirements of the child. *Seem* then takes place, and the child is given another name.

If it is a boy to be consecrated, a cock is taken for sacrifice; if a girl, a guinea-fowl. A water-pot is set up containing chewed roots. The pot is then placed on a little mound built in honour of the totem or the ancestor, and the cock or the guinea-fowl is killed on

the usual stone placed on the mound. Some drops of blood are poured on the water-pot, and feathers stuck on the blood. In doing this they usually say: "I give you this cock and this infant; watch him; take care of him; see that his mother and he be always in good health."

The mother meanwhile has made food, and the parents, having roasted the liver, the heart, and the lungs of the bird, place them with a small part of the food on the water-jug, and they say again: "See, I give you food and a bird to eat. I beg you to keep all diseases and evil from the mother and the child."

They then take the bones of the bird and tie them round the loins of the child.

In the afternoon they will take the water from the pot and wash the infant. Every day he is forced to drink some of the water, and the same calabash, without being washed, is used.

There is another ceremony worthy of note which takes place when a child is born and is believed to be the re-incarnation of its dead brother or sister. It is called *ting-daro*. The babe is taken almost immediately after birth and placed on the *tampuri* (midden), where it is pulled a little way by a woman. The reason would seem that the former child lies buried there. It may, however, be a fictitious burial to deceive the spirit which took away the babe at its first birth, for a belief in the efficacy of such fictions is prevalent. Children are given abusive names, such as Kaba (slave), Kassena; Aiyamaga (slave), Nankanni; Atampuri, and so on, when former children have died in infancy; and for the same reason one will often see a child with its face marked with the tattoo of an alien tribe. It is, so to speak, done in order to change one's luck. The same idea seems to be the reason why a man of these tribes will nearly always give himself a strange name when enlisting in Government service.

This is similar to the Ga custom of the Accra nations,

who throw the child away when he is supposed to be the re-incarnation of a dead brother, and bring him back from the earth, placing a few cowries or coppers on the rubbish heap. Such children are often named Acheafom, which means, I believe, " thrown away."

When an infant dies the mother shaves her head and girds herself with a string made from a hibiscus, cultivated everywhere for its fibre. After a month she makes a fresh shaving and a new string is put on, this time one dyed red ; a third shaving takes place, and the string is changed to one of plaited grass. No intercourse with a man may take place, and the woman may wear no personal adornment. Three months after the death, if the babe was a boy, four months if a girl, the bereaved mother goes to her father's house and takes with her her sleeping-mat and her calabashes, and her own mother gives her new ones.

Always the numbers three for a boy and four for a girl ! I could find no explanation.

It recurs again in the funeral customs. M. Tauxier mentions this among the Nunume: " The funeral ceremony lasts three days if it is for an old man, and four if for an old woman, for the number three is for males and four for females (thus they name a boy three days after his birth, a girl four days after). . . ." Again, among the Kassena-Fra, a few of which tribe are to be found at Kayoro, Nakon, and villages in Tumu District in British territory, he says : " At Nitiedugu the grave-diggers are given three fowls for a man, four for a woman," and later, when speaking of the slaying of witches : " Next morning (*i.e.*, after the slaying) the witch comes in search of you, three times if he is a male, four times if a female."

In a previous chapter I have related how twins are regarded either as devils or human beings, and one can only find this out by consulting the sorcerer's stones. If

they are declared human, a certain dread of them is noticed. They have to be treated in exactly the same way. Each will have his own particular breast; later their food, presents, etc., will always be alike until their marriage. Twins may be caused by witchcraft. There is a magic medicine which will do this. It is put on a stone in the field where the woman is sure to come for leaves and other ingredients for her cooking. Should she sit thereon twins will surely be born to her.

The usual explanation, however, is that bearing twins is a hereditary failing.

Children are ordinarily suckled until their mother becomes pregnant again, which is at least two years later. Should the mother die, the babe is nourished by a woman of the compound, but there would seem no tie occasioned thereby, for in all matters pertaining to a child the rights are vested in the father, to whom it belongs outright.

Selling one's own children is, of course, not openly practised to-day; but several people, commenting on the famine early in 1919, said that had it not been for the white man's presence, which provided safety in travelling to more favoured parts, they would have had to sell their own offspring. Similarly adoption would be abhorrent, but a custom exists for a son to give his eldest male and female children to the grandfather on the father's side, and another custom of exchanging the ownership of the eldest children between two brothers.

The last important event in early childhood is the first hair-cutting. The date for this depends, like every other unusual operation, on the verdict of the sorcerer's stones. These first shorn locks are kept by the mother in the roof of her hut. Should the child belong to the chameleon family the hair is never shaved, as is the common practice, but is cut.

Sometimes at the first cutting a tuft of hair is left

at the back of the head to ensure the mother obtaining more children.

From now on the child is to all intents left alone, accompanying its mother about the compound and to the field. It is said that in this way the Nankanni families have learned to speak Kassena and forgotten Nankanni, and *vice versa*. As children they learned the speech of their mothers, who in Navarro were nearly always Kassena, because a marriage between blood relations, however remote, is abhorrent to these people. Thus, so long as a man remains in the district settled by his own people he can never marry a girl of that district nor of a district formed by emigrants therefrom. It will be seen that this prohibition affects relatives in the male line, since the girls are given in marriage to outside communities. There seems no rule to prevent marrying a relative on this female side; once gone from her father's land she is soon forgotten, and in a short time her offspring are marriageable to her male relatives in her home district.

It is the proximity of the blood tie which prevents these marriages. There is no particular reason given for these rules forbidding marriage of near relations. But if blood relationship is discovered after a marriage —it is obvious the tie will be a loose one and dated from some generations back—a small ceremony is usually observed in order to avoid possible evil. A calabash is taken and the married couple pull it apart, each taking hold of the brim. They may then continue to co-habit.

Children grow up together and sleep in the same hut until they reach a marriageable age. This in itself is not naturally conducive to immorality; but it would be hard indeed to find even one virgin in the two districts. The Kassena are particularly loose in this respect, the Nankanni and Builsa women are not so openly flagrant in their vices. It is a common practice for a man to invite his friend to have

intercourse with one of his wives, especially if the husband is an old man. The reason is that the old men are the rich men, and so control the market of the women, and so long as women are regarded as chattels, and acquiesce therein, so long will this be so. Old men will have the women, and only illicit intercourse is possible for the youth of either sex, since youth must be satisfied.

To obtain a wife, the usual method is to conciliate her parents by frequent visits and small presents such as salt, fowls, etc. During this time some parents are quite content to permit intercourse, since they still retain the ownership of the girl, and, unless her temporary husband can satisfy their requirements in the shape of presents, will eventually own the children. But others consider it an honour if a daughter of theirs proves to be virgin at the time of excision. This ceremony is a public one and the occasion for much dancing. Anyone may attend, but I found no opportunity to do so. The girls are usually about fourteen years at the time. Circumcision of the boys is not performed. In Nankanni, or, rather, certain parts of their country, a custom is observed of a fixed price for a woman. It is four cows, payable only after the birth of children, and in reality this price conveys the ownership of the children to the father, and is, I was told, the reason for the practice. In Kassena and Builsa there seems to be no definite price or present the acceptance of which once and for all conveys a woman from her family to that of her husband, with the result that almost invariably a girl will, on returning to her father's compound for funeral customs, etc., be given to another man. Disputes innumerable arise from this, as well as from the growing practice of the girl to ignore their family's wishes and to go to the husband of their choice. This last is progress, but unfortunately it leads to a maze of entanglements. First the girl will not rest content with her choice ; at

A GROUP OF NANKANNI WOMEN.

BUILSA WOMEN IN NAKON MARKET.

[face p. 70.]

TYPES OF NANKANNI PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINERS.

[face p. 77.]

the smallest provocation she will go to another man; at the least misfortune all the inherent superstition that is in her will tell her that it is due to disobedience; and, lastly, her relatives will persistently persecute her with coaxing and cajoling and threats. Many of these women, having tasted emancipation, are not satisfied until they have tried even as many as ten husbands. It is not the white man who has brought this about. Such has been the practice for long past. It led to murder and war and raids; to-day it leads to disputes and complaints beyond number, and incidentally at times to a half-crazy Commissioner. Once I was asked by a girl to choose for her a husband. She came to me with her aunt, and said she had two husbands but only wanted one. She ran through the catalogue of their qualifications, but considered these were balanced. Would I give my casting vote? The aunt, who was a very aged dame, explained how she had had seven husbands, but had eventually returned to her first. I suggested the girl should do the same; but she replied she had no use for him at all, and had left her child with him in full settlement. The two men in question were quite new husbands.

Injured husbands do not want a monetary award from adulterers. The giving of cowries and cash savours of sale, and to accept such would not only insult one's errant wife but her family. Such an insult might stir up the spirits of her dead and cause all manner of evil. No; he is content with getting the woman back to him; and, once in his compound, he will try to pacify her by presents and food. Cruel enough as they all are to thieves, they are not unkind to their wives or their children. Fear prompts this kindness. No one is afraid to die in a moment of temper, and a woman will frequently stab herself with a poisoned arrow. Such a catastrophe would almost ruin the husband. There are all manner of spirits to pacify, spirits to cleanse as well as outraged relatives

to appease. If an arrow is not handy these women, and men too, hurl themselves, head first, at stones and trees or anything hard which might put an end to their grief. Many such cases have come to me; twice I witnessed men throw themselves at a mud wall in a paroxysm of anger; one smashed the wall and was unconscious for a short time, the other happened to hit a stone with his head. Neither the stone nor the head were injured. All these people are extraordinarily high-strung. In a moment of grief and anger they are not responsible for their actions. A young girl was watching while her sister's infant died. She rushed from the hut and hurled herself at the wooden tree-stumps which acted as the gate-posts. She cracked her skull, and the stump broke her arm and the outside wall. She picked herself up and went screaming into the guinea-corn. She was eventually pacified.

Madness is no rare ailment. Hot-tempered men not infrequently run amok and resort on the slightest pretext to their arrows. In these cases their war-cry is not responded to, and their own relatives, often at the cost of their lives, intervene to subdue the madman. One of the most curious forms of insanity—to digress a little—is met with in men. I came across four or five cases. These lunatics from early childhood forget their sex and adopt the habits and customs of the women. They clothe themselves in the latest fashion of leaves (men being either naked or dressed in skins or loin-cloths), they help with the cooking and household work reserved for the female element, and they even imitate the walk of women. Men do not despise them; they merely look on them as women. And the women themselves are indifferent, naturally refuse sexual intercourse, but are glad of their greater strength.

To return to the subject of women and marriage: there are two other methods of obtaining a wife

Frequently a married woman, after visiting her father's compound, will bring back a younger sister to help her in the housework. This girl is looked on as a new wife to the husband, no matter what her age, nor does he resist as a rule having intercourse with her. Even if the girl only remains one night in her brother-in-law's compound, it is considered a marriage. Disputes between the husband and the parents are very common, and there are no rules in this matter.

One writes of marriage. It is misleading. A woman is looked upon primarily as a begetter of children, and secondly as a preparer of food. Except among the Nankanni, adultery is not even an offence. In this it would seem that the Nankanni show a closer connection with the Moshi than with the Mamprussi or Dagomba. They—the Nankanni—did not resort to their bows and arrows as a rule over the infidelity of a wife. It was a matter of settlement by payment of cows. A stick or dead tree was marked off and cows were tied to it by the neck till no room could be found for more. The reason for this severe penalty was that adultery, naturally enough, could hardly take place other than through a member of the community. The blood tie was violated and the Earth-god angered. Other men would not content themselves with mere adultery; they would seize the woman herself. An opportunity to commit a single act of adultery was not easy to find. Among the Kassena and Builsa it was otherwise. For a relative or friend or member of the same community all men were, and are, quite prepared to offer the services of a wife. It is an ordinary courtesy. The essential thing is the children, and they, no matter who their father, belong to the owner of their mother. Every woman has, besides her husband, one or two favourite lovers to whom her husband has no objection.

Efforts are made to prevent the prevalent immorality. There is at Wiassi a powerful spirit who

cares not for adultery. To commit that social crime in that particular part is to offend him, and culprits must pacify him with sacrifices. Frequently at the time of delivery a woman in her anguish will call that her lovers have "tied her." They must pacify the spirit of the place and make sacrifices on the path leading to the house. The amount of the sacrifice apparently depends on the extent of the friendship or otherwise between the offender and the husband. It is noteworthy that in this ceremony the first fowl killed is not eaten. It is thrown away, and, moreover, it is slain by being beaten to death on a stone, differing thereby from the usual method of slaying in sacrifice, which is by throat-cutting.

A third way of obtaining a wife is by capture. It is commonest among the Kassena, although not unknown among the other tribes, and is a practice which is dying out under our influence. The girl is carried off by men or women of the man's compound. She is exceptionally well treated, but kept a prisoner by the women. All sorts of presents are given her, and not infrequently she agrees, and then her parents are informed and usually pacified. This method is adopted with consenting girls but dissenting parents. The latter, however, by long tradition, still maintain control over the girl, and probably she will eventually return to them if they are long in withholding their consent.

In cases of divorce the universal practice in these parts is for the family of the wife to return to her husband the presents received from him, provided there are no children by the marriage. Should there have been offspring, then no repayment is made unless the husband demands it, in which case the children belong to the family of their mother.

The prevalent immorality is noted by M. Tauxier, who mentions it as a custom peculiar to all these tribes which by neighbours are designated Grunshi.

He says: "When a woman deceives her husband, he beats her and her lover. Then the latter sends and asks for forgiveness, either by himself or through his family, with presents varying according to locality. . . . In some places the husband, after having beaten his wife, tells her to go and live with her lover. Then the lover's family bring back the woman and ask for forgiveness, and the next day the lover himself comes with a fowl, a ball of tobacco and some firewood. Whichever procedure is followed, if the husband accepts the presents, he gives the lover permission to have intercourse with his wife. . . . When permission is given, the lover has the right to use the woman as well as the husband, but on certain regular conditions: first, that the children who might be born from this tripartite establishment will belong as before to the husband, which is obvious; and again, the lover will have to come from time to time to help the husband in farming his fields. If the husband's house falls down, he will help to rebuild it. He will bring him small presents, such as firewood for the cold season. He will bring the woman presents also, such as guinea-fowls. If she has small patches of ground-nuts or ground-peas, he will tend them for her. In short, he will have certain strict obligations to perform for the husband and woman. . . ."

This is a custom which I could not find among the Nankanni, Talansi, or Nabdam; nor do I believe it prevalent in Dagomba or Mamprussi. Certainly it is not in Moshi. I imagine this is a remnant of polyandry, just as is the custom of *iiwia* and is peculiar to the Kassena and Builsa.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAILY ROUND

AMONG the Builsa and Kassena a most acceptable present during the stage of wooing is a dog. It is considered a delicacy, although it is so foul a feeder. Indeed, dogs are specially used by the women as scavengers, and early in the morning one is always hearing them cry "Dog! dog!" to call him back to clean up the filth of the night. But the people here are all unclean eaters. They care not which hand they use in feeding—unlike the Ashanti, who reserves his right hand for dirty work and his left for clean. I have seen sights fit to turn one's stomach; but these people are indifferent. There is a field-rat which is greatly desired. They are taken at the time of burning grass, when clumps are left after the fire has first gone through. The animals are pounded up in their skins and no effort is made to disembowel them. When the pounded animal is putrescent it is eaten.

Few things are inedible. Except for one's totem, all meat is devoured, fowl, flesh, and fish. Snakes and caterpillars of *Cirina butyrospermii*, the shea-butter pest, frogs, and even lizards all find their way to the local stomachs. The usual food, however, is millet, guinea-corn, beans, ground-nuts and divers roots. At the end of the dry season there is usually great scarcity, and the improvident ones seek out many weeds and the new leaves of trees. One Nankanni brought me twenty-two edible weeds from a field in front of my

house at Zuaragu. Once the first rains begin, the shea-butter, baobab, locust-beans and other fruits mature and help to carry on till the early crop of millet. Curiously enough, there is grown no sweet or succulent fruit, but arboriculture is not unknown, for strophanthus and *Trephosia vogelii* are cultivated, and kapok and certain species of acacia are tended.

Planting usually takes place after the second or third rain, and the farms are prepared at the beginning of the dry season and hoed over once more after the first rain. The method of obtaining land has been explained before. So long as the family remains in that district, so long the land belongs to them. There is no communal holding. A title once given by the *tindana* is good in perpetuity.

This question of land is of far greater seriousness than that of women. Land is so intricately mixed up with the religious belief—it is so large a factor in their lives, since the crops are not always successful, and only recently has the bush come to be farmed ; it holds, too, the dead founders of the household—that disputes have led, and lead to-day, to much fighting and bloodshed. The *tindana* must prevent this. The Chief knows nothing of the land and may be resident miles from the area in dispute. The *tindana* arrives and places his "hat"—a bowl-shaped cap made of string and dyed black—on the ground, and then requires peace. Should some hot-headed youth continue or commence the battle, he is marked, and in course of time, when peace has been restored, the *tindana* proclaims him *tuku* (Nankanni), and a *tuku* man can never again be given assistance in his farming. Without such help from friends and relatives a man cannot possibly farm enough for his requirements. Men not under this disability beg people to come and hoe for them, and in reward provide them with beer and dancing. There is little trouble to get labour this way, only one cannot get it quickly. Every native is willing to help his neighbour

unless there is some private dispute between them, and they make the work the occasion for much singing and jollity. I twice saw large crocodiles cut out of the land—probably twenty yards long—and asked what they were for, and on both occasions I was told that after farming a man's land they had cut these out to play and to amuse themselves, and had got their fathers to sit on the carving while watching their dancing.

The implements used are hoes, which are shaped in the form of an ordinary spade, with the four angles pointed and a ring to fix on the end of a V-shaped stick. Small axes are used for cutting the shrubs and trees, and these are shaped somewhat like our own and fixed on a similarly cut stick as that for hoes, a shape which makes it easy to carry on the shoulder. Planting is done by women and children. A long pole with a paddle-like end well planed down is used to make the holes and the women and children drop in the seeds and cover over with a swift movement of the foot The field is merely roughly hoed up, but in the case of sweet potatoes, ground-peas, and Frafra potatoes it is heaped up in ridges. Fields surrounding the compounds are manured naturally by the inhabitants thereof and those a little way off by the manure from the goat and sheep-pens. Cow-dung is wanted to make waterproof the outside walls of the houses. Rice is being gradually introduced, and yams are not doing badly round Navarro, but are apparently a failure in Builsa and Nankanni country.

Early millet and guinea-corn are planted in the same field usually, but the later millet is grown alone. In the bush-farms, which are usually far distant, for convenience sake the crop is a single one. Apart from frequent hoeing, no particular attention is paid to the growing crops, but in Builsa country, from before dawn till sundown, children and women are stationed on platforms erected in the fields, and shout and cast stones from slings and keep shaking long lines

of string to which broken pottery and bones, and even pieces of tin and feathers, are attached to scare away the large flocks of small birds that come to satiate their hunger on the ripening grain.

Harvest is in June and July for early millet and November for guinea-corn and late millet. The other crops are gathered at intervals between these dates. There is thus a long gap, which is tided over by storing the grain, but is most frequently a period of semi-starvation.

Women and men alike are great devotees to tobacco. It is smoked, chewed, and taken as snuff. The women are particularly partial to the pipe. I have never seen one chewing or snuffing. These pipes are made of a clay finer than that of everyday pots; they are frequently moulded into all shapes and sizes, and their mouthpiece is attached by string or worked leather. The stem is the stalk of a specially cultivated shrub which I cannot identify, and is often as much as four feet long. The pith is extracted and the wood dried. There seem no particular rites attached to smoking, but it is a curious fact that, if tobacco is a recent introduction, say five hundred years old, one finds here a pagan people, cut off by their customs from outside influence and with the scantiest inter-communication even among themselves, ultra-conservative by nature and by their occupation as agriculturists, and yet expert growers of a foreign plant—a plant that requires special treatment differing from every other crop they harvest. For tobacco is first grown in nurseries and is later transplanted to the tobacco-fields. And here these people have learned to produce the crop in three different ways. The highly-manured piece of land outside their compound door, the sandy under-cliffs on the river-banks deep under water till late October, the rich soil with which the rivers have covered the neighbouring fields in the great September flood are alike used for tobacco-growing; and curiously

enough, land which is known by all to be the property of a certain man is cultivated in common once the guinea-corn is harvested, nor does the *tindana* interfere. When asked if there were ever any disputes as to tobacco farms the reply is always given: "Why should there be? Tobacco is not food." This last is, I think, a proof of its foreign origin, but it is to my mind an extraordinary effort for these people to have mastered tobacco cultivation, to have invented pipes, and to have discovered a plant useful for their stems.

Farms are protected from thieves by many different medicines. Usually there are stones marked with crosses, even zwastika. (I have just read in an article by Sir Ray Lankester that the zwastika is but a recent introduction in Africa. Throughout these parts, from Dagomba country northward, the commonest form of stone-marking is a cross enclosed in a square or a circle with variations inclining towards a good specimen of a zwastika.) Others are fowl feathers, horns, bits of old bed-mats, and so forth, suspended to sticks. What particular power they are supposed to have I know not, and it is likewise, I presume, the ignorance of the native on this point which makes for the greater efficacy of the "medicine." I once saw a man stoop and pull up some ground-nuts. His friend pointed out the medicine and the man dropped them like a hot coal, or rather quicker, because these people handle glowing embers without seeming to notice anything particularly warm. There are counter-medicines of which thieves avail themselves, but the ordinary individual is an honest man out here.

One of the most remarkable features, to my mind, that I have noticed among these natives is a not uncommon practice of dealing in futures. Perhaps the cotton and grain exchanges had their origin in a similar way. For a variety of reasons—hunger, lack of labour, etc.—a man may be unwilling to harvest his

crop. He sells it outright as it stands. He will even sell it before the grain is visible. All the tribes do this, and the Earth-god is not in the least offended, although the sale of the land would be a crime than which nothing could be more sacrilegious, more anarchical, or more certain to lead to war.

Cattle, goats, and sheep are numerous. They are herded by the small boys, whose duty it is to see that they do not wander in the growing crops—a duty, needless to say, much neglected. For the children gathering together give themselves up to play. They have a special game akin to hockey, making special hard sticks to hit a stone in lieu of a ball, but there is no ulterior motive such as goal-getting. The great idea is to keep the stone away from the others. More serious games are pitched battles, clubs being used, and the aim robbery of the defeated's lunch, which is either an ear or two of millet or some toasted ground-nuts. Challenges are given, and the children take the cattle away from the sight of their fathers' compounds. Parents apparently do not approve of cracked skulls for their children and chastise delinquents with guinea-corn stalks—a very mild form of whipping—or, if very angry, forget to give them supper, which is the one and only meal for everyone during the day. Meanwhile the cattle enjoy the crops. Goats and sheep are frequently tethered. But these grass lands are not common property; they are farm lands temporarily lying fallow.

Cows and dogs play a sufficiently intimate part in everyday life to warrant their receiving names; sheep and goats are too numerous. As an example, Tarma-yeli-kunsokre, which means roughly that "a poor man cannot question the doings of a rich man." So much for a dog. Aiyan-malifaw was the name of a cow. This supposed a dispute between the cows, when one said to another, "I am better than you," and the other replied, "That may be so, but I am better than

an antelope." This last is the meaning of the name. These are usually bestowed by the small boys.

Horses are not indigenous to the country, nor are they usually healthy when living therein. Before the white man's advent they were rare indeed and to their use Babatu owed much of his prowess. The stony nature of Nankanni and Talansi country is probably the reason for their immunity from his raids.

Bees are common property. Anyone is at liberty to take their honey, no matter on whose farm they have nested. The taking is done with fire and smoke. The bees are in theory supposed to go to the top of the tree out of the way when one robs their home. In practice this is not always so. Personally I never approached the tree at this time. Honey finds a ready market and the wax is used by blacksmiths for the *cire perdu* process in moulding rings, etc.

Guinea-fowls are very numerous. They do not sit on their own eggs, and these are given to fowls to take care of. In this way each year the stock is renewed. Fowls are usually kept for sacrificial occasions, but guinea-fowls are eaten quite commonly. One man I know had an enormous flock. He did not know their number, but when they were young had counted over two thousand, keeping stones for reckoning. This flock would entirely be eaten by his household in two seasons and again renewed. The guinea-fowls frequently roost away from the trees near their home compound and so cause many disputes, because one can only catch them by knocking them over first. A man identifies his guinea-fowl or fowl or duck by marking their feet or comb, mutilating one or more joints.

Usually sheep and cattle are not marked. Their value is great, and they are so closely connected with the family that one knows them as one knows one's brother. But if the flock is very large, as in Builsa

country, however, frequently red or blue marks are placed on them.

In Builsa there is a curious custom that if a man sees a cow giving birth to a calf, and attaches a string to that calf's neck, it will become his. This custom is known as *nissim*. Everywhere there is a practice of giving one's cattle or sheep or other property to a friend or relative to look after. From a Commissioner's point of view this is a terrible custom. Sometimes they are left for years and the caretaker comes to look on them as his own. Should the caretaker die, and his property be divided among his sons, the owner of the sheep ordinarily puts in a claim to it all. It is a curious custom, but is deeply rooted. Even soldiers returning from East Africa to their homes gave to a friend their money to look after and accepted their friend's for the same purpose. Again, when a rich man dies, his property is usually more or less equally divided and then the sons take it to the oldest male in the family, who looks after it for them and who in turn divides the herd among his friends to look after. It is a complicated state of affairs, but tends to bind a gradually loosening family tie and has the effect of placing more power over the young men in the hands of the aged. Thus a son of a dead rich man when requiring a wife will have to beg his old relative for the necessary cows, even though they are his own rightful inheritance. Unless the boy was a good one, *i.e.*, a good help to the old man, he would probably experience some difficulty in getting them, although the old man would admit they were his property. It has also the effect of making the family responsible for the evil doings of one of its individuals; for when a man has carried off a woman, or stolen some property, the outraged family will often content themselves with taking any property corresponding in value from the community to which the evildoer belonged.

In Nankanni and Kassena hunting and fishing are

usually done in common. The former takes place at the time of the annual grass-burning, which corresponds with the season for arrow-poisoning and serves to test the strength of the poison. Formerly it was the occasion to pay off many a vendetta, and the arrow of the slayer would provide a certain identification of the community responsible. The old men were usually unable to restrain the youths and a war resulted. I have never seen poison made here, but am told that its ingredients are strophanthus and frogs' and snakes' heads. Strophanthus is not cultivated now, nor has it been for many years. It is an evil thing, and the Earth-god required considerable sacrifices. Curiously enough, there is quite a good trade in the prepared poison towards the north, a trade that has existed for many years, and the strophanthus from the Tong Hills was specially preferred.

Hunting in company merely consists of driving and rounding up the bush with the help of fire. Nowadays but little game is killed, and that chiefly small animals, from duikers down to mice, with an occasional kob or roan. There are a few individuals who devote their time to hunting. They gain a certain livelihood by the sale of roan and buffalo horns for musical instruments and war helmets, the last consisting of the horns mounted either on calabashes or caps woven from rushes and grass.

The Builsa are the best hunters, and their country contains plenty of game, from elephants and lions to roan, hartebeeste, kob, waterbuck, buffalo, gazelle and duiker. Company hunting is indulged in by them, but many hunt alone. Lions are usually neglected, and if one kills the cows the people are quite content to take the meat away and leave the marauder. Should, however, one slay a man or woman, they will not leave it. It was the custom, and presumably still is, to track the killer down and beat it to death, no matter how dangerous it may become. The last

killed in this way was just before the outbreak of war.

Another method used in killing lions is equally dangerous. A man clothes himself in a cow-skin and, after wounding the lion, lies down. The animal attacks him and falls a victim to others in ambush. It is said that a lion cannot tear through a properly prepared skin.

At Tyutyilliga elephant-hunting was a speciality. To-day it would be extraordinary for elephants to roam around there, but the special weapons used are preserved ever ready. The weapon is a stout staff hardened in fire about five to six feet long. An iron head barbed and thickly smeared with strophanthus was tied loosely to the staff, being easily detachable. As soon as the herd was sighted the men climbed into the trees and the children and youths went out to meet the elephants. These they drove towards where their menfolk were concealed, and as the elephants passed the men harpooned them, the poison acting quickly and the loose stick bothering them to madness. Apparently this method was peculiar to that one small district.

Other weapons are clubs, spears, and bows and arrows. The bows are made either of a small bamboo or a stick of hard wood made harder by fire and curved against a tree. The string is usually a strip of a very hard reed. The arrow-shafts have no notch and are very light and short. Quivers are made of hollowed-out wood bound together by leather and skin and cloth as fancy wills. They are not very large, containing between fifty to one hundred arrows apiece. Naturally the arrows bear a distinctive mark, either a cut on the shaft or more frequently a certain number of coloured feathers bound to the shaft by the grass which keeps the iron point fixed.

The Builsa people had a special war-weapon of their own. It was shaped like a V, and to the shorter

arm was fixed a long poison-covered and barbed point. Babatu's men were very afraid of this. The Builsa also specialised in slings. These they did not use in war, they told me, because they said quite seriously a sling stone would hurt anyone it hit; but they used them against Babatu. Again, the Builsa are noticeable as having shields. No other tribes in the neighbourhood have these. They are the full cow's skin cut into a circle, with a cord to pass over the neck and on either side cords through which to pass the arms. Opened, they give a man a butterfly appearance, and when shut cover him completely.

Among the Builsa, too, a special arrow called *pim vorbe* is used to avenge one's brother's death. It is not barbed, but shaped somewhat like a bradawl with its edges roughly dentated zigzag. On recovering the corpse of one's brother, this arrow is taken and inserted in the wound. After a time the arrow is withdrawn, coated anew with strophanthus and fixed in a shaft, but not tied in with grass. This latter is to ensure the point being left in the wound of its victim when the shaft is withdrawn. The arrow is taken secretly to the washing-place of the women, where it is buried so that blood from the girls may be washed over the place where it is concealed. It is later taken away and on the first opportunity used.

The method of fighting is similar among them all. First the war-cry—a shout of alarm that in itself conveys nothing to its hearers but to which all and sundry must listen and obey—then the shout, "I am a man," or "My fathers call me," a short run, a feint, a crouching down and an arrow flicked away, and then a short run back. All the time the man is shouting abuse at his adversary and throwing up earth with his right hand like an angry bull with its foot. The Builsa opens his shield to shoot and, quickly closing, runs back. An arrow will pierce up to two hundred yards, but the shooting is poor. It is not necessary,

however, to touch a vital spot, the poison will do its work from the smallest scratch. The war-cry raised, all other men of the section answer it and run to the scene of combat. Thus the fight becomes general and, unless a *tindana* can soon stop it, will spread through many communities allied to the disputants, and these, remembering old feuds and wrongs, vendettas unrepaid and unavenged murders, the flame of war spreads quicker than even the bush fires. Vendettas, however, generally remain as such, and do not tend to bring about a general war.

After committing murder certain ceremonies must be performed. Until these are done the offender may not enter into his wife's hut nor hold any communication with her nor with his children. Relatives and strangers alike will not speak to him but express their desires by signs. Food is brought him by a former murderer, and until the third day he must sleep in company with other murderers on the midden of his ancestors. A cow or sheep is then slain and one of the horns is encircled with a piece of skin from the neck of a fowl and skin of a cat. On this horn a little of the blood of the sacrifice is poured and the meal is divided among the former murderers. They then all go to the midden, and after cutting the man's hair in the form of a cross from his forehead to the neck and from ear to ear, they place on his head a mixture made from certain grasses gathered in the bush. They then eat together. A death by misadventure does not require this ceremony. A murderer can be known because he must wear on his neck a little piece of wood.

Peace-making is remarkable for a ceremony carried out by both parties when fighting has stopped and a payment of a cow, etc., agreed upon. They meet at their frontier and kill a cow, which is divided. The undigested food and intestines are then thrown on the ground and both parties stamp on them. That concludes peace and each returns to his compound

crying out that "Peace is made; the undigested has been stamped on."

Fishing in company is an amusing sight. Nets, baskets, calabashes, and hands are used to catch the fish. Women gather from all parts to take their share in the proceedings. Individual fishing is practised by spearing and by netting. But an interesting method is used by the Nabdam, who pound a plant they call *beem* and throw the mash into water, which becomes ink-coloured and thereby the fish are stupefied. This is a practice common in Dagomba and Mamprussi, and eastward, so far as my knowledge goes, to the district of Sokode in Togoland. The plant is *Trephosia vogelii*.

CHAPTER IX

THE DAILY ROUND (*continued*)

OF local industries there are many: pottery, iron-smelting, blacksmith, ivory-cutting (but not carving), charcoal-burning and fibre-spinning into string and ropes from which hats and bags are made, very similar to the expanding market-bags used in England. Charcoal-burners are generally those who live on the outskirts of the communities, and they certainly help in no small way in the continuous destruction of the bush. Iron-smelters are chiefly centred round Kayoro, Navarro-Pum, Mayoro, and Sirigu. Blacksmiths are everywhere. Their principal articles of manufacture are hoes, axes, arrows, spears, knives, and needles for thorn-extraction. The tools used consist of tongs the original of which are mythically said to have fallen from the sky, iron spikes somewhat like glorified marling-spikes, and chisels. The string is woven usually by small boys and is certainly both strong and neat, some of it being very fine twine indeed. Boys likewise make the bags. I do not know who makes the hats for the *tindanas*, but the same string is used.

The ivory-cutters use a double-handed and double-bladed saw of native workmanship, but they are only capable of making armlets, which they hollow out by chiselling after sawing off the tusk the desired width. These bangles and armlets fetch a high price.

Weaving baskets from grass is quite a high art. All shapes and sizes are made and different colours used. The bed-mats are also of grass, seven-foot lengths being

used, and as these taper naturally the resultant mat is a secant of a circle. Several of these straws of grass are dyed red and black, and so serve to mark it for the owner.

In addition there are new industries becoming freely adopted : indigo dyeing, cotton-weaving, leather dyeing, and leather-making.

These are all imported trades from the passage of cattle-driving or kola-seeking men of the North, who come from as far as Timbuktu on their way to Ashanti. Through Navarro alone 89,000 men passed northward in 1917, carrying kola.

The greatest centre of social life is at the markets. They were usually on every sixth day, with an intermediate third-day market known as the women's market. Practically every community had one. They were protected by powerful Earth-gods or other spirits, who prevented them from becoming the scenes of vendetta tragedies or from degenerating into pitched battles. Doninga was the most famous market and is very ancient. In the time of Babatu it was perforce abandoned, but to-day, restored, is probably the largest in both Districts. Cowries were, and still are, the medium for purchase, but for large sales resource is had to exchange. A young colt I saw exchanged for a donkey, a goat, a fowl, and sixpence. The people have strange ideas of trading with the white man. I was trying to encourage the manufacture of string, and was offering a price of 1s. 6d. per pound—a truly magnificent return. Now everyone makes string; it is an article of everyday use and necessity. It is usually spun from the fibre of various kinds of hibiscus by small boys while tending the cattle, and by them made into net-bags for all the world like those used at home. Now string is not sold in the markets, but the bags are. The price of these was 3d. or 6d., according to whether they were plain or dyed. Their weight was usually over two pounds.

I said I wanted the string and was offered any amount as a gift. I said I wanted to buy. With much difficulty I found a youth willing to sell a hank which weighed only a quarter of a pound. He demanded a shilling, and the father explained—leastways, he called it an explanation—that they had never sold string before—the bags, yes, but what could the white man want string for ? This was not an isolated case. I had grown some ground-nuts and wished to value them. They were in baskets, and I offered one for sale. I was quoted six shillings. I then pointed out that a woman was selling for a halfpenny, or rather, as she called it, a copper—being indifferent as to whether it was the whole or the half—quite a large calabashful as well as a small handful of " extras." My customer admitted that, but said my basket had a lot in it. I measured it out for him to see, and it came to ten calabashes with about ten " extras." He still said six shillings was his price, and if I wanted to sell he would pay that. I gave it up and him the ground-nuts.

Doninga was the scene of many stirring raids, which are still related, and the place is shown where the men of Bedema waylaid and slew twenty of the Doninga on their return from a raid on Kanjaga. That particular episode arose through a girl of Kanjaga who dared a Doninga man to come. Girls and beer have much the same effect as women and wine.

The principal Talansi market was at Bari. It is not far from the hills at Tong, and was many times raided by the hillmen. Those living among the rocks, I was told, become like their surroundings, hard and strong. It was the same with the Nankanni market at Namogu, which many times was visited by marauders from around Zokko. Kulmasa, the principal mart of the Nabdam, is close to the hills round Nangodi and proved an irresistible attraction for the highlanders. However, in spite of all this they survived and flourished. Markets were a necessity, for they

collected food and other supplies which, by the very nature of the country and the climate, were sure to be badly needed somewhere. Even to-day people will ask permission for a market to be established temporarily, and give as the reason for their request that they are starving, and as soon as plenty has come again send in to say they no longer wish for one. In the regular markets, unless they happen to be in a part where scarcity exists, one does not ordinarily see much food; there is a certain quantity, a greater supply of dainties such as hot cakes, a variety of articles for personal use, and plenty of beer.

These markets not only served as the one and only means of intercommunication in the past, more or less safe, but they were certainly becoming more and more visited by foreign traders. They could not, of course, wander about singly or in small companies as they do to-day; but they came in large caravans protected by as many as three hundred armed men. They came from the North, and dealt in slaves in the Salaga and Kintampo markets, bringing back kola. At Navarro one can have pointed out the trees where they were allowed to encamp and to which the local women brought them food. They were not above capturing a local man or two on their way. Stories are remembered about them, notably of a great fight when the Tongo hill-men crossed the Volta and ambushed a caravan near Dua. The Tongo people, of course, gained a great victory, capturing many donkeys. I have not heard the other version of the episode. There was no road for them through the Nankanni or Talansi country, but they apparently followed two routes, one through Navarro and the other through Doninga, passing what was then the thickly inhabited country round Nakon, Vari, and Bachawnsi, all of which is now but the habitat of antelopes and elephants.

The houses of all the people are similar. They resemble forts or miniature castles, consisting of a

CHIEF OF NAVARRO'S COMPOUND, SHOWING THE PAINTED EXTERIOR WALLS.

A NANKANNI COMPOUND.

[face p. 98.]

A TALANSI COMPOUND.

KASSENA COMPOUNDS

[face p. 99.]

series of round huts connected with walls and surrounding a central yard in which the cows are kept. Sheep, goats, and fowls have usually huts for themselves, and there are also cylinder-shaped granaries for the dry season, beneath which often a special grass is placed to keep away white ants. Each group of huts is devoted to special purposes, every man of the compound having his own little settlement for his wife and children; the unmarried and the elder children have theirs as well, and the richer men have for each of their wives a separate hut. All are connected with a passage running right round and about the compound, making it a veritable maze, but between each group of huts there are low walls with steps to aid one to climb. All are made of mud, and to make it watertight are smeared with a preparation of locust-bean pods and cow-dung. They are scrupulously clean, differing from the central yard. The roofs are flat and made of small sticks with mud in the interstices between the rafters, or in Nabdam and Talansi and many parts of Builsa grass-roofed. The flat-roofed huts have often a skylight in the roof, which is covered with a broken pot in rainy weather. In the Kassena country the houses are painted red, white and black in unsymmetrical forms and remind one irresistibly of camouflaged objects. Everywhere mural decorations are indulged in, tortoises and crocodiles with cowries for eyes being the favourite. These are mouldings, but very often one will see paintings, made by fingers instead of brushes, portraying men and women and animals.

The door into these huts is merely a small circular opening close to the ground, and immediately on entering one is faced with an interior wall over which one sometimes climbs and round which at other times one has to walk. These inner walls are to prevent a foe from carrying out a vendetta murder at night.

Each compound has about fifteen to twenty inhabitants, but there are some very large ones which

hold over one hundred and fifty, and are almost villages in themselves. There is also a hut reserved for meeting and conversation. In Builsa and Kassena country these are usually outside, but in Nankanni, Talansi, and Nabdam are part of the main building. The entrance is just wide enough for cows to enter, and is closed at night with heavy posts and bars. The inconvenience of having to go right round to the entrance is overcome by placing during the daytime small tree-trunks, in which steps are hewn, against the walls of the flat-roofed houses.

Every compound has its main entrance facing west, and the groups of living huts form the opposite side of the circle. This is due to the rains, which beat in invariably from the east and are usually of hurricane force. The prevalent breeze is fortunately from the eastward too, or otherwise life would hardly be endurable, since the front yards not only are the cow-pens, but are also used as the nocturnal latrines.

Nowadays these compounds tend to grow smaller owing to the security enjoyed under our rule, but many are still made of a considerable size. Stones are not now used in their construction, but in the country between the hills at Bachawnsi and the Sisili River there are remains of many compounds of which the walls were constructed of mud and stones roughly hewn more or less flat.

All houses are sealed up at night. The main gateway is blocked with heavy sticks and old tree-stumps, the walls often having a thorn hedge fixed on top to prevent lions and hyenas from coming inside, and the ladders are all removed. In cold weather they remain thus shut till the sun is well up, when the household begins to bestir itself. First one sees women issue forth over the walls with water-pots, and in harvest-time the children proceed very early to the fields to act as scarecrows. The men are more deliberate and when the air is nicely warm take down

the gate and let out the cows and sheep. Usually a fairly wide road is kept leading to the compound for the cattle to pass; this is fenced with poles, and even thorn bushes are planted to form a hedge to protect the crop round the compound from being eaten and trampled by the herd. In Builsa particularly does one notice these early efforts at hedging, and occasionally a field of ground-nuts will be so protected.

The use of thorn protection is employed also to guard the guinea-fowls from cats. The birds when they grow up usually leave their owners' compound and roost in trees. These are then girdled with a skirt of thorns, whereby marauding felines are effectively warded off. It is frequently said that the black man is negligent of his animals. He may neglect what seems to us necessary, but he most certainly tends them to the best of his ability. Frequently one of the first of his matutinal duties is to go in search of white ants for them. If the country round has been cultivated the probability is that no nests will be handy. He therefore traps them. A likely spot is chosen. Sticks and other food are placed in a hole and moist cow-dung on top. All is then covered with a pot, and next day taken up and is usually found full of ants. Again, water-pots are specially made for fowls. These are the usual shape, but have holes all round sufficiently large for a fowl's neck. Every compound has them, and they are excellent places for mosquitoes.

If planting or hoeing is not necessary the men do not usually remain idle. Trees are to be ringbarked for next year's bush-farms, string to be made and bags from the string, visits to the sorcerer or the blacksmith, helmets to be adorned with cowries, quivers to be made gaudy with coloured cloth and leather and iguana skins; even gunpowder to be made. During the war European-made black powder was hard to obtain, and they fell back on their own less powerful brand

The Chief of Zuaragu had a fair quantity made and accidentally it was wetted. To test its efficiency he applied fire to the lot. The result to him was painful. Being an optimist, he considered his totem fetish was partial to him, since he was still alive.

Most people rest in the middle of the day owing to the heat, and return to their fields or work about four o'clock. It is the evening, however, when the women are still preparing the meal that the men foregather to exchange yarns and the day's news. Then, too, the musicians come and flatter them, and often receive presents of extraordinary value. A troubadour, indeed, makes a good living ; a conceited man will give much to hear chanted flattery. Constables are easy prey, and if the minstrel has learned the name of his victim and weaves it into his song of praise he may expect even as much as a sheep.

At this time young men visit their lady-loves, who neglect the preparation of food. And the prostitutes (for lack of a better word I so call them) get their worshippers to make their farms, etc., for them. These girls are generally fatherless and with no adult male relative sufficiently close to look after them, and have on their hands younger brothers or sisters or an aged mother. Rather than leave their home they will accept lovers, not promiscuously, but with a nice choice as to their working powers, and so maintain not only the house but also the home farms. Such women are *iiwia* (Nankanni), *katogo* (Kassena). This practice is not far removed from polyandry.

And as night draws on the meal is ready. From every housetop one then hears the housewife calling to her spouse to come, to leave the conversation of his friends, and maybe, too, the flowing bowl. Imagination need not be great to figure instead the club and public-house of England.

Night, too, is for dances and funeral customs. The Kassena are specially fond of these, the Nankanni being

still not quite used to his immunity from lurking foes.

Before writing of the funeral customs a word about clothing may be of interest. It is usual for all men, no matter what their age, to work in the farms stark naked, and when their labour for the day is done they usually don only a skin, which is worn over the back and kept in place by a fore and hind leg sewn together. The advent of the white man is fast changing this. Triangular loin-cloths of Moshi texture or small drawers are worn by the men, and on gala occasions the old ones wear long white coats with ample sleeves and the younger ones white sleeveless jumpers. Clothes dyed a dark blue are not uncommon, and more and more one sees fully-dressed men with trousers and flowing robes. *Tindanas*, naturally, are disinclined to change their fashion.

Most people, too, have hats. These are either of straw locally woven and of many and various shapes, or white cloth caps reminding one of the traditional headgear of cooks, or merely calabashes, sometimes plain and sometimes adorned with cowries or skin.

Women wear leaves. Different trees supply the different modes. But whilst the men do not wear ornaments, save, perhaps, a necklace of stone beads or an armlet or two, the women affect many bangles of ivory and copper and earthenware. Their necklaces are of coloured beads, and the string which holds in place the leafy dress is often of most finely woven and coloured grass. In Nankanni long grass in black, white and red is worn instead of leaves, and is woven into various patterns at the top. Leather and dyed cloth are often found as well, but are only three to four inches wide. The main part of the dress is at the back.

Lip and ear ornaments are occasionally affected. These are sometimes a ground neolith, sometimes a straw, and often a porcupine quill. Particularly in the hilly country is this form of decoration prevalent.

CHAPTER X

FUNERAL CUSTOMS

THE funeral customs are more or less alike with all these people. The actual burial is very different. So far as I could learn, each family has its own particular practice. In Nankanni the heads of compounds and women who have done their duty well in leaving many offspring are honoured by being buried inside their compound, or, if they have recently built a new one, in the midden of their old one. Babies, being nothing, are merely placed in the scrap heap. Young people are buried in a common vault, which holds as a rule from thirty to forty corpses. I learned that one individual family is not necessarily buried all together in one vault, but I could not find out who was buried in what vault. The buriers own the graves and know, but they are disinclined to talk about dead people, and mostly agree with what one says or refer one to an older man. For payment they usually receive a fowl and the clothes the corpse is wearing. The bed-mat or stretcher on which the body is carried to the vault is burnt there. Women are laid apart from the men and face west, whilst men face the dawn, because all evil comes from women, and if they see the sunrise they would spoil the day. This philosophical truth seems to have been grasped by savage man in every clime.

The shape of these vaults is like a mushroom upside down and, like every other building, is circular. The walls are supported by stones and the whole is covered with large stone slabs and usually a pot. One can imagine, but not describe, the state

these vaults were in during the epidemic of influenza early in 1919. Close on 10,000 deaths were reported to me—to be exact, 9,761—and that number was incomplete. Babies were not counted, and during the last three weeks or so of the sickness no record was taken. To this must be added also the natural disinclination of primitive men to count their numbers, especially their dead.

So terrible was the visitation that funeral customs were suspended, people remained passively in their houses and only women issued forth to fetch water. The quiet in the countryside was nerve-trying. Sorcerers, *tindanas*, and Chiefs alike enjoined silence; weeping was unheard; and the dead were frequently buried where they fell. Their burial-places were remembered, and even as I write, a year later, the funeral customs are being observed, earth from the burial-place being treated as the corpse itself. Convinced, too, that death was certain, everyone grew regardless of the future and emptied their granaries, so that had it not been for a providential fall of rain in May, causing an early and record first harvest, famine would have ensued.

It is a common practice to bring earth from a man's burial-place if he died far away from his house, or, better, to bring a piece of his clothes. Thus the returning spirit will find he has not been neglected by his family, and will therefore be disinclined to trouble them with sickness or misfortune. The following is an account of death and burial among the Kassena. As soon as a man is dangerously ill and his death expected, no male may enter his hut. His women-folk help him till the last. Turn and turn about, they ease his head by resting it in their laps, and even when he is dead they still so hold him. But when the corpse grows cold one of the women goes out of the compound over the wall, not by the main entrance, and runs to tell a neighbour of the ill news. She returns as secretly as

she went. The neighbour then informs the next people and the parents of the deceased, who hasten to the house. This secretiveness is to prevent suicide. In a previous chapter I related an incident at Zokko showing how grief frequently drives near relatives to such drastic measures. Many, many are such cases, but, curiously enough, during the influenza epidemic, none were reported. Death was too universal and grief so great that men and women were dazed and helpless in its visitation.

As soon as people have reached the house they watch the members of the household for the same reason and hide all arrows, knives, etc., whilst, if need be, women watch the widow. Silence is maintained, and everyone sits around the house meditating presumably over death or their own particular loss in the deceased. It is not difficult thus to reach a proper mood of sorrow, and tears and grief are never far distant after such reflections.

When the elders of the community arrive they sit in the shelter and after due deliberation decide on the hour when the grief will be expressed ; and when that time comes for a half-hour or more nothing but wailing and crying is to be heard. From time to time a man rises from the sitting weepers and enters the yard of the hut. He is usually supported by two women.

There, with cries and lamentation, he gives vent to his sorrow at the loss of his friend, and having walked around the yard he returns to his seat and ceases his lament.

Another and another follow his example, and when all are done songs are begun in honour of the departed. The men form into two lines ; at their head are two singers. Slowly they move around the house, the singers leading in the chant whilst the rest respond in chorus in a by no means inharmonious song.

The following are some specimens of these funeral psalms :

I

Sesang' kane a nu sine o ketem o ma ti.
Chorus : *Dyore yi velda s'en dyong zonlanga s'endyong tyana zanbililongo.*
A pare garo a bolo sine o fage lam dure.
Chorus : *A nu ye ve tyiru n'yage ne o' Leseng' kane a nu sine o zang o zo bone.*

ROUGH TRANSLATION

My mother, O woman beautiful as a mare, is dead ; she is no more than a corpse.
Come back, come back, go not hence ; you will have fine stones, bracelets, and necklaces.
My friend, clothed as a chief, brings you all fine things.
O, my mother, beautiful as a mare, is no more. She has descended into the tomb.

II

Tum dyeg' dyelia logo won i na. A ba' wo a nu o wa wa wa a nu o a ba' a nu o'.
Nabin bebaro tem na wo a sane ne tum wo wo diga zo.

ROUGH TRANSLATION

Death worries and troubles the sight. Let us greet it.
O, my mother, mother mine!
Evil ones have entered your hut. Death comes from above.
O, my mother, mother mine!

III

O dene na dom voro tigane ba doge nane ba pi, ox dene na sang yala tanga Badonia ye dyene, o kwo den' ora o dyong ngwam nonabane.
Wolo ya yere na. Kawa baro sakaro zo tiga deban den nona ba dye wale wale.

ROUGH TRANSLATION

Once he was strong with his hoe in the farm.
And his children led back his cows in number.
The people of Badonia feared to come when he took his arrows and his bow.

Meanwhile the grave-diggers (*baiya*, Nankanni, *baye*, Kassena, *vaiasi*, Builsa) of the community have arrived, and are shown by the elders where the grave should be dug. Old men are buried in the courtyard of their house (*nabo*), but if the soil is too damp a piece of high ground near the house is selected. Women are buried in the little yard in front of their huts (*konkolo*). Children outside near the house and young men in the common vault.

Four or five of the youngest *baye* dig the hole in turns. They use their little axes—not their hoes—and they remove the earth with their hands and a calabash. The opening is round, about eighteen inches in diameter, but at the depth of about a foot it increases in size and becomes semicircular, running north and south and reaching a depth of about four feet.

Sometimes when the labour is finished the grave-diggers see the soul of a sick friend in the grave. They try to drive it away, throwing some straws from a sleeping-mat inside and blowing thereon smoke from their pipes, spitting and throwing mud into the tomb. Should the sick friend die soon after, they say they were unable to drive the soul out of the grave.

As soon as their task is over the elders are informed. The oldest of them then orders one of the deceased's relatives to give a fowl to the son of the *tigatu*, who kills it by beating it on the ground, saying, "Take this with you." Often a sheep is killed instead, which is done by hitting it on the head and breast with a club. After the sacrifice the chief grave-digger takes the best part of the victim and the rest is divided among the

others. In addition, a fowl or sheep is given in sex and value according to the dead one; and these are killed on the spot in the usual way, *i.e.*, by cutting their throats, and then prepared for eating. The elders are frequently invited to participate with the diggers in the repast. Again, when the burial is over they are further rewarded, but this time none but the *baye* may eat of the meat.

When the moment for actual burial arrives the corpse is covered with a sleeping-mat, and two of the *baye*, stark naked, carry it on their left shoulders and head first. One climbs down into the grave and another holds a mat at the opening so as to prevent anyone from seeing the corpse being lowered into the earth. As a matter of fact, no one ever goes near the open tomb. Then, feet first, the dead man is handed down, being received by the one inside. He places it on its side, facing east or west according to whether it is a man or woman, draws up its legs and places one arm under its head. In Nankanni and Talansi the corpse is frequently buried straight out without bending its legs.

A young man is buried quite naked; a young married man in a loin-cloth, and an old man in a dark blue gown, a white cap, and dark blue native cloth. Women are buried naked.

An earthen pot is then taken—a little larger than the opening of the tomb—and is placed on top. Mud is then stuck over the pot and certain marks made to prevent the tomb's violation. The people then disperse.

Next day the *baye* return, remove the covering pot and make certain that nothing has been disturbed. It is then replaced and covered with a deep layer of earth.

On the third day if it was a man, on the fourth if a woman, the neighbours send for a sorcerer. On his arrival the women sit on one side, the men on another,

and he who fetched the sorcerer squats in front of him ; and in this case the consultation is made aloud. The sorcerer is asked what is the reason for the death and what the dead man wishes to eat. He replies by touching with his wand one of the various objects set in front of him out of his magic bag. After the consultation he is given a fowl, millet, and some beer ; but he does not drink the latter, returning it to the elders, who dispose of it.

Such is the burial itself and the ceremonies observed at the time. Later, often when many months have passed, two funeral customs take place if the deceased was an important personage, one if one of ordinary worth. These are *lare* (Kassena ; *kiema* Nankanni) and *lua* (Kassena ; *tigri* Nankanni). *Lare* is for the former, *lua* in all cases except for babies, who do not count.

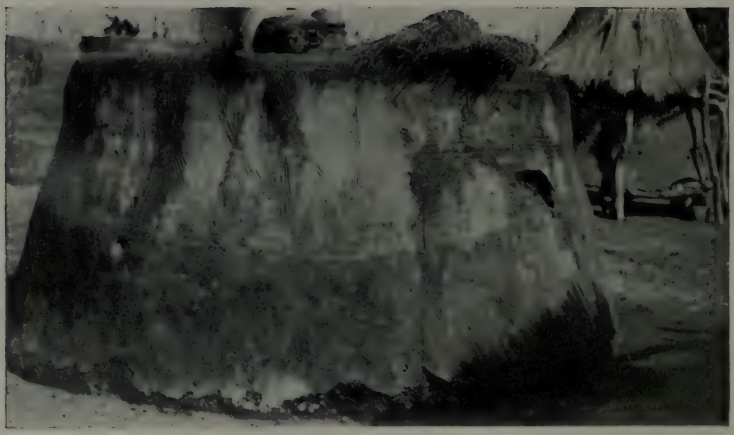
Lare usually lasts three days. People from all parts attend, and dancing, singing, and music are the order of the day. Everyone is dressed in their best—fine clothes and skins, decorated helmets and quivers, well oiled and washed, eyes painted with antimony—in short, in a manner to show their wealth and strength and beauty. Speeches are made in honour of the departed, speeches of which the number is checked merely by the financial position of those desirous to speak, for every orator must give at least a fowl, which the musicians receive. Dancing lasts all day and often all night. Young men play at war, attacking neighbouring compounds, whose inhabitants come out and join in the festivities.

The ceremony of *lua* is obligatory. As soon as it has been decided to hold this custom, those who should organise it gather together and arrange what to do, recall what was omitted at the burial, or decide to add to what was then done. Three or four days after this gathering a ceremony called *zore yibele* takes place. Plenty of people come as a banquet

NABDAM TYPES STANDING BEFORE THE FAMILY TOMBS.

ANCESTRAL GRAVES.

[*face p.* 110.]



A COMPOUND FOUNDER'S TOMB.

IN THE NANKANNI COUNTRY, WITH A TINGANI IN THE BACKGROUND AND COMMUNAL VAULTS IN THE FOREGROUND.

[*face p.* 111.]

follows. All the *kadikwa*, *i.e.*, women who have parents in the community of the deceased, arrive and pour a little shea-butter over the grave and spread it with their hands over the mound which marks the entrance. After that, the banquet.

Among the Nankanni at this time there takes place a peculiar custom known as *dolongo*, and the day for the celebration is known as *kure*, an appellation which includes both *tigri* and *dolongo*. When the offerings of food are brought to the deceased and it has been learned from the sorcerer that the gifts are acceptable, the women-folk of the deceased, *i.e.*, his near kinsfolk, and the sons gather together. The elders then proceed to tie them up. There are two methods: one is to place a rope round the neck and tie with it the hands behind the back, the other is to tie the thumbs and wrists together in front. After a short dance the young people return to their homes and bring back fowls, guinea-fowls, or sheep. These are killed and the bonds are loosened.

M. Tauxier thinks this custom is a relic of cannibalism and that the presents redeem the victims. That is an explanation which seems likely to be true. The Nankanni are not disgusted when one talks of eating human beings, as the bush Ashanti is; and, further, they say that their fathers certainly used to eat men. I think, too, the practice of teeth-filing is also an indication of this custom.

In a few days the *lua* proper takes place. All the relatives of the deceased and the members of his or her community attend. Beer is brewed in large quantities, and, when that is ready, food of all sorts prepared. Branches of a tree called *kase* are then fetched. (This is the tree usually used for firewood.) On the day in question, when all are assembled, the departed's bow and arrows and quiver are taken. The widow, who has had no sexual intercourse since her husband's death, holds the bow, which a grave-digger cuts in three

pieces with his axe. All are then rolled into a bed-mat. In the case of a woman her calabash, basket, and a pot full of holes like a sieve are treated in the same way. A *kadikwa* then takes a few straws and sets fire to them. She enters the deceased's hut accompanied by a grave-digger bearing the mat with its contents. Once inside, the latter takes some grain and other food and places it in the mat. They then both come out, the woman first, and enter the main courtyard if the deceased was the house-owner, go outside the compound if another man, if a woman on to the path which leads to the house of her parents. With the branches of the *kase* a fire is then made and the quiver, etc., thrown thereon. To this tobacco and salt are added. A fowl, a sheep, and a dog are then sacrificed. The dead one's walking-stick is used to poke the fire; and lastly, when all is burnt and the food and beer distributed, the people go home. The deceased is finished with; the man's life is properly ended, and he can and should from now on dwell in the land of the departed and return no more from *tyiru dyega*.

PART II

LANGUAGE

THERE are in the Gold Coast and its dependencies, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories two great languages: Twi, which is spoken in its many dialects in Fanti, Ashanti, Gonja, Bole, Wa, and Chakosi, and a language which in its simplest form is spoken by the Moshi. In the Northern Territories this latter language covers all Dagomba, Mamprussi, Kusasi, Nabdam, Talansi, Nankanni, Builsa, Dagati and Lobi, and has been set to writing in its Moshi form by two or three French authors, notably Mons. F. Froger (1910), and Mons. F. Dubois and Bluzet, and latterly by Mr. Rattray, M.B.E., of the Gold Coast Civil Service. In its Dagomba dialect a German author, Herr H. Fisch, in 1912 published a work, and in 1917 Mr. J. S. Okraku contributed a grammar and vocabulary of the Tamale variation of the same tongue.

In the two Districts of Navarro and Zuaragu one finds four distinct dialects and a language which is evidently fast disappearing. It is this last that I now endeavour to record—the language of Kassena, called by them Awuna. The Nankanni resembles closely the Moshi; Nabdam and Talansi to Mamprussi; Builsa to Dagomba. The Kassena language I believe to be of the same family group, but somewhat distantly related thereto.

Undoubtedly the invasions from east and west

which established the Moshi, Mamprussi, and Dagomba kingdoms on the one hand, and the Gonja and Wala kingdoms on the other, have influenced these dialects to a great extent, and, so far as one can learn, the Kassena language is spoken by the remnant of an invading host which came from the west. It is spoken in British territory only—in Pinda, Paga, Kayoro, and parts of Navarro, Tyana, Nakon, Mayoro, and Tyutyilliga. Navarro and Mayoro are more than half Nankanni; the other three are mixed with Builsa. Probably less than 15,000 British subjects understand Awuna, which tends to the westward to become dialects spoken by the Fra and Issala people.

The survival of this language is due to the custom of the people leaving young children in their mother's care. They thus acquire in childhood the tongue of the mother, and she is either unrelated to her husband or very remotely so. The custom of wife-capture introduced a new dialect into the household, and her children perpetuated their mother's tongue with the modifications inevitable from their surroundings.

The difficulties of writing down a hitherto unwritten language are immense. This is no immodesty on my part. The following vocabulary is one given me entirely by the Rev. White Fathers established at Navarro, missionaries who live among the people and who have perforce to speak the language every day and all day; all that I have done is to translate their work from French into English. As for the grammar, I have used their notes and amplified them with the help of a Kassena youth named Bali Cyprian who, rescued from slavery in his childhood by the French, has lived his life with the Fathers and been highly educated by them so that he can read and write and do all the work expected from a clerk in Government service. Of Kassena blood, he has lived most of his life in Kassena country, and I have but set a course along which he has steered me.

I record this Kassena language not with a view of anyone ever troubling to learn to speak it, since it is a tongue of very small importance, but in an endeavour to perpetuate a language which our presence must in time cause to disappear. Not only do the Nankanni tend more and more to intermarry with the Kassena, but they are daily invading Kassena country in the markets, in settlement and in manual labour on the farms. Further, every year the young men from the north pass through the country of the Kassena in increasing numbers in search of money. True, they are merely passers-on, returning soon to their homeland; but they are all Moshi speakers, and now that the country is peaceful they are no longer under the necessity of keeping to the main trade route, but pass along any of the roads from the frontier. Their numbers cannot be reckoned. They are free to register at Navarro or not, and those that do not take the main road remain uncounted. In 1917, 89,000 reported themselves at Navarro southward-bound. Since they all returned to their homeland, that alone gives a figure of 180,000 Moshi speakers passing through Kassena in less than twelve months. Moshi is the *lingua franca* of the Northern Territories, and the Kassena women perforce have to learn it for its use in the markets.

But the main difficulty in recording the language of another race is the vicious circle in which one finds oneself, viz., to learn a language one must learn its users' customs, and to know the customs one must know the language.

Many words in this vocabulary will be found to differ from those in use in Kayoro or other villages. Probably each compound has more or less its own dialect, and when, intercommunication being difficult and dangerous, communities kept to themselves, the tendency was for dialects to increase. Not only the advent of strange and foreign women in the household

aided in this, but the malformation of the tongue or teeth or mouth, or even the practice of teeth-filing, helped in this process of change.

Like all primitive languages, the Kassena or Awuna is rich in concrete nouns. Insects, weeds, trees, and so on all have their names; the differently-shaped arrows have theirs. But in abstract nouns the dearth is very great, for the simple reason that abstract thoughts do not exist. No one here talks of patriotism, gratitude, love. Everyone is too materialistic.

And as in country districts at home wild animals and birds often have names differing in each locality, so it is here. It may be of interest to give the following list of the bigger game:

English	*Nankanni*	*Builsa*	*Kassena*
Elephant	*Wobogo*	*Yao*	*Tu*
Lion	*Jigindi*	*Bweggeni*	*Nyengo*
Leopard	*Goba*	*Wobbia*	*Gwero*
Buffalo	*We'nafo*	*Gwon'nab*	*Ga'nao*
Roan	*Walpeliga*	*Kap*	*Kong*
Hartebeeste	*Sebiga*	*Sebiga*	*Siga*
Senegal Hartebeeste	——	*Nabelisem*	——
Waterbuck	——	*Nonbirigu*	*Lanibero*
Kob	*Malifaw*	*Yub*	*Wura*
Reedbuck	——	*Nong*	*Panon*
Bushbuck	——	*Kungu*	*Kungu*
Redfronted Gazelle	*Nyaka*	*Nenanga*	*Fera*
Oribi	*Walaga*	*Walagh*	*Wunga*
Duiker	*Isaga*	*Isagh*	*Togo*
Bush-pig (all kinds)	*Dia*	*Diaw*	*Teri*

There is, however, one—to me very interesting—fact to record. Kassena and Builsa alike can talk by means of whistling. This is a development far beyond the much-talked-of Ashanti drumming. For, after all, that drumming is not really so very wonderful. Not everyone can understand the words of the drum, not everyone can read its message. Moreover, the drums talk a recognised message only. True, it is generally verbiose, but still, it is not possible for a drummer to tell his friend in the next village to bring him his cloth. That is a matter so trivial and of a nature so capable of manifold alterations that it cannot be expressed by drumming. War and misfortune—yes. Such messages are limited in number and can be learnt, just as a soldier knows the bugle calls or a civilian hears "God Save the King" when someone hums the tune. Church bells are often said to say, "Come and pray"; the yellowhammer cries "A little bit of bread and no cheese." Such are commonly accepted, and we can all recognise the words. The Ashanti drummer is like that. He reads a drum message which he has learned and is thus enabled to read therein a meaning. But these people convey trivial messages by whistling, such as "Come"; "I am going to the market"; "Bring me my pipe"; "There are plenty of antelopes"; "I have lost my white cow"; "Have you seen my donkey?"; "The sheep are in your guinea-corn." The longest message I heard was while out hunting. We had passed a man in his millet field and he had told us no "meat" had been seen. We left him on his bird-platform and went on, and were about eight hundred yards away from him when he whistled, and my hunter read this message: "There are plenty of big meat in front of you on the hill to the left far away." The hunter whistled him to repeat, and he did so, and then whistled for him to come and show us, which he did.

And this whistling is done by pipe as well as by

mouth, nor is it at all shrill, but even close at hand appears soft and subdued. But the message arrives quite clear and distinct.

To pronounce properly the following words it is necessary to be taught by a native of the country; and I have made no attempt to show the varying intonation by the use of diacritical marks.

The vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian:

a as a in *father*
e as a in *fate*
i as ee in *need*
o as ow in *flow*
u as oo in *rood*

Shortening of vowels is marked by reduplication of the subsequent consonant. When two or more vowels are together they are pronounced separately, thereby

ai tends to become i in *mine*
ei „ „ „ ey in *they*
ao „ „ „ ow in *how*

In a few words, such as *ntaw*, *bataw*, etc., *aw* is to be pronounced as in law. But this sound *aw* is almost an *o*, but very short, being somewhere between the *o* of *not* and the *aw* of *law*.

Consonants are as in English—*g* always being hard.

gh is a guttural
dy, *ky*, *ty* are *d*, *k*, *t* mollified

Relationship is both through blood and marriage and is marked by generations. Thus a man's relatives are:

Nankanni	*Kassena*	*English*	
yaba	*nakwian*	grandfather	or male of parallel generation
ba	*kwo*	father	
biale	*nabwo*	brother	
bia	*bu*	son	
yanga	*nao*	grandson	

The terms are used for relatives on either side, both through the mother and father, and when one is married one automatically acquires as relatives of the same designation all one's wife's relations of senior and equal rank to her. Thus a man's *ba* may be either his own proper father, his father's brother or *biale*, his mother's brother or *biale*, or his wife's father, or her uncle or any *ba* she might have. Not necessarily will a *ba* be older than one's self. With polygamy the opposite frequently occurs and a multitude of *bas* are created. Those on the man's own side as distinct from the contributions which his wife brought him make up the section or community as a rule, and their senior *yaba* is usually their headman. The sons of a *ba* become one's *biale*, their grandsons' *bia* to whom one is a *ba*, and the great grandchildren are all *yanga*. Particular terms are used when one wishes to be more explicit, but are not usual.

The corresponding terms for the female relatives are the same, excepting *ma* replaces *ba* and *nu kwo*.

NOUNS

Formation of Feminine.—Where it is desired to draw a distinction between the sexes, the feminine is denoted by the word *kane* :

a child *bu*	a girl *busankane*
a horse *sisanga*	a mare *sisankane*
a bull *nabia*	a cow *na kane*
(*nago* or *nao* being a head of cattle)	
a cock *tye-bia*	a hen *tye-kane*
(*tyoro* being a fowl of both sexes).	

But in the event of the female having already produced offspring the word *nia* is used :

Sesannia, nania, tyenia.

Formation of the Plural.—

1.—Nouns ending in *-ro -no* change the *-ro -no* into *-ra, -na*, and those in *-on* add *-na* :

faro	a man who does good to others ; pl. *fara*	
varo	an animal	pl., *vara*
nono	a man	pl., *nona*
pipino	a trader	pl., *pipina*
kadon	a polygamous wife	pl., *kadonna*
badon	a friend	pl., *badonna*

2.—Nouns ending in *-la* and *-a* change the *-la*, *-a* into *-le* *-e* :

bala	male	pl., *bale*
kala	pot	pl., *kale*
kaba	slave	pl., *kabe*
kapa	snake	pl., *kape*
baya	grave-digger	pl., *baye*

3.—Nouns ending in *-e*, *-i* change the *-e*, *-i* into *-a* :

kanzue	caterpillar	pl., *kanzua*
bisili	grass roof	pl., *bisila*
bodori	a hoe	pl., *bodora*

4.—Nouns ending in *-ngo* and *-go* change the *-ngo* and *-go* into *-no* and *-ro* :

kukwango	a cloud	pl., *kukwano*
nieniego	a colour	pl., *nieniero*
bongo	a goat	pl., *bono*

There are a number of nouns which form their plural by cutting off the last syllable :

tiga	earth	(a meaning which would be rendered by *town*, if towns existed) ; pl., *ti*
diga	hut	pl., *di*

There are a large number of irregular plurals :

banga	bangle	pl., *be*
sisanga	horse	pl., *sise*
wunga	gazelle	pl., *we*
benga	rafter	pl., *be*

From the above it would seem that, when a noun ends in *-nga*, the last two syllables are changed into *-e*.

pia	sheep	pl., *peni*
kua	bone	pl., *kui*
kukura	dog	pl., *kukuri*
nago	cow	pl., *nani*
bu	child	pl., *bia*
nu	mother	pl., *nina*
zonga	calabash	pl., *zui*
basankwyan	snake	pl., *basankwi*
bonnaga	donkey	pl., *bonne*

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives follow the noun they qualify and have frequently the effect of eliding the last syllable of that noun :

sesang'zono	a black horse
diga-nu pongo	a white mouse (i.e., mother of the
non' dedaro	a tall man [house)
kukur' balawro	a bad dog

When two or more adjectives are used to qualify the same noun the one with the shorter number of syllables is usually placed first, e.g., a large bad dog, *kukur'faro balawro*, which becomes *kukur' far' balawro*.

Numerals are always the last.

Adjectives are to be found in plural forms which follow the rules of the nouns ; but exceptions are numerous :

we napono	white gazelles
zui fara	large calabashes
zui fara fuga	ten large calabashes

But *zui kumunu*, large calabashes ; *nona dedaro*, tall men.

POSSESSIVE AND INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVES:

am' sesanga	my horse
mo sesanga	your horse
o peni	his sheep
deban bonne	our donkeys
abban kukuri	your dogs
ba nani	their cows
waw'sesanga ?	whose horse ?

N.B.—Which cow ? Which horse ? *Nago daw* ? *Sesang' kaw ?* making a plural : *Nan' daw* ? *Sese saw ?*

The syllable *mo* is used frequently after *daw*, *kaw*, etc. Thus : *Mo nan' daw mo ?* Which of your cows ? *Mo nan' daw mo dye ?* Which cows have you lost? Both is translated by " all two."

Both cows : *nan' dele mama.*
Both horses : *sese sele mama*

NUMERALS

	Cardinals	*Ordinals*	*Adjectival*
1	*kalo*	*yiggatu*	*dedua*
2	*nle*	*seletu*	*sele*
3	*ntaw*	*setotu*	*setaw*
4	*nna*	*senatu*	*sena*
5	*nnu*	*senutu*	*senu*
6	*ndon*	*serdontu*	*serdon*
7	*mpe*	*serpetu*	*serpe*
8	*nana*	*nanatu*	*nana*
9	*nobogo*	*nobogo tu*	*nobogo*
10	*fuga*	*fuga tu*	*fuga*
11	*fugkalo*		
12	*fuga bale*		
20	*finle*	100	*bi*
30	*fintaw*	200	*bi yele*
40	*finna*	500	*bi yennu*
50	*finnu*	600	*bi yerdon*

NUMERALS (*continued*).

	Cardinals	*Ordinals*	*Adjectival*
60	*fi'serdon*	1,000	*moro*
70	*fi'serpe*	2,000	*mo'telloe*
80	*finnana*	5,000	*mo'tenu*
90	*fin nobogo*	6,000	*mo'terdon*

myriads, millions, etc., *moro moro*.

The Kassena, when counting, does not use twelve and twenty-five or other intermediate numbers between the tens, but having set aside one ten, commences over again and then adds up his tens, and so on. It will be noticed that the consonant *s* is the adjectival form, but *b* is used when the noun terminates in *a* and *d* for those that end in *i* :

Give me six sheep	*pa ni pe serdon*
Give me six horses	*pa ni sise serdon*
Give me six cows	*pa ni nan' derdon*
Give me six fowls	*pa ni tyen' derdon*
Give me six hoes	*pa ni bodora bardon*

This, again, is noticed in numbers such as fifteen, twenty-seven, etc. :

Fifteen cows	*nan' fuga denu*
Twenty-five sheep	*pe' finle senu*
Thirty-five hoes	*bodora finto banu*

Moreover, this form is still observed when the number is given without its noun. In answer to the question, "How many cows ?" it would be *fuga derpe* (seventeen), or for sheep, *fuga serpe*.

Fractions are represented by a half, *tyityoro*, and for smaller portions one uses *tyityerega*, a small piece.

ADVERBS

once	*bedi*	three times	*kuni betaw*
twice	*kuni bele*	ten times	*kuni fuga*

A neia o kuni bele, "I have seen him twice," but the *kuni* is often understood.

VERBS

In the conjugation of verbs it would seem that the true form is a past form and on it are based the Present and Future tenses :

gane	conveying the meaning of	cutting
figese	,,	snuffing
fire	,,	slapping
duga	,,	planting
saga	,,	dancing
diri	,,	running
leni	,,	singing

The Present tense is formed by the auxiliary *a ora*, which will be followed by the repetition of the pronoun and the verb form changed by attraction into an *a* termination :

gane makes *a ora a gana*
fire ,, *a ora a fira*
leni ,, *a ora a lena*
duga ,, *a ora a dua*

In its complete form the tense is as follows :

Singular	*Plural*
a ora a lena	*de ora de lena*
mo ora n'lena	*abban ora a lena*
o ora o lena	*ba ora ba lena*

N.B.—The Second Person Plural, however, is usually contracted into *a' ora a lena*.

The Future Simple is formed by the use of the word *o*, which has a future signification, and no repetition of the pronoun is necessary :

a o leni, mo o leni, o o leni, de o leni, a o leni, ba o leni.

The Imperfect is formed by the use of the word *ya*, which conveys a meaning of the past and is used in conjunction with the auxiliary :

a ya ora a lena.

The Past, both Perfect and Aorist, is the verb form with the pronoun only :

a leni	*de leni*
mo leni	*abban leni*
o leni	*ba leni*

The Future Perfect and Pluperfect are formed by using in conjunction with the verb form the two words *o* and *ya*, which convey the Future and Past senses :

a ya o leni
a ya leni

Irregular verbs are not uncommon :

Ex. : *dyega*, to possess

Present	*a dyega*
Future	*a o na* or *a o ta dyega*
Past	*a ya dyega*
Fut. Perfect	*a ya o na* or *a ya o ta dyega*
Pluperfect	*a den dyega* (*den* meaning "long ago")

Ex. : *dia* to eat and *kea* to make.

Present	*a di* or *a ora a di*	*a ke*
Future	*a o di*	*a o ke*
Imperfect	*a ya ora a di*	*a ya ora a ke*
Past	*a dia*	*a kea*
Fut. Perfect	*a ya o di*	*a ya o ke*
Pluperfect	*a ya dia*	*a ya kea*

Verb : *yi* (to be ; copulative)

a yi
a o ta yi

Past not far off	*a ya yi*
Past far off	*a den yi*
	a den ya o ta yi

Verb : *ora* (to be, to exist)

Present	*a ora*
Future	*a ta ora*
Past	*a den ora* or *a ya ora*

The negative form of the verb requires the word *ba*, but in the Past tenses this is replaced by *o*. A confusion, indeed, with the Future Simple in its positive form, but in practice the sense of the conversation, negative gestures and most frequently the word *o-o-o*, meaning *no*, as introduction to the sentence, eliminates misunderstandings.

Present	*a ba lena*
Future	*a ba leni*
Imperfect	*a ya ba lena*
Past	*a o leni*
Pluperfect	*a ya o leni*

This same conversational knowledge prevents a misunderstanding in *a ba di*, the Present and Future of the negative form of *di*.

The Interrogative is formed by the word *na* placed at the end of the sentence, and is equivalent to *or . . .?*

Thus it is impossible to say "Have you any children?" One must say, "You have children, eh?"

mo bina, na?	are you coming?
mo gu o, na?	did you kill him?

The Imperative is the verb form itself:

leni	sing
sa	dance

The Third Person is formed by the use of the auxiliary *yage:*

yage o s'o sa (lit., let him that he dance)
yage ba se ba sa, let them dance

A Gerundive is formed by the prefix *na*, thus:

I heard you singing	*a nia mmo na lena*
I saw you eating	*a neia mmo na di*
I saw you steal	*a neia mmo na ngwana*

But the Verbal Noun is more or less regularly formed :

ganem	cutting
figsem	snuff-taking
firem	slapping
du'm	planting
du'm ye baro tetonga	to plant is man's work
lenga	to sing
se	dancing
dirim	running

Excepting in such words as are so commonly used, as " to sing," etc. :

a soe lenga	I like singing
mo soe ngweni	You like stealing

PRONOUNS

I	*amo*	with a verb	*a*
You	*m'mo*	„	*mo*
He	*omo*	„	*o*
We	*deban*	„	*de*
You	*abban*	„	*abban, a*
They	*banto*	„	*ba*

There is no change for the Accusative save that the form *ba* is usually taken for the Third Person Plural :

mo neia ba	You saw them.
mo neia amo, na ?	Did you see me ?

For emphasis *tete* follows the pronoun :

amo tete
mo neia amo tete, na ?

The same word has a reflexive sense :

a soe a tete	I love myself
o gone o tete	He cut himself

(N.B.—*Gane* is only for grass and hair, *gone* is for more serious work.)

RELATIVE PRONOUNS :—

The man who came	*non wolo na tua*
The men who came	*nona balo na tua*
The horse which came	*sisang' kalo na tua*
The horses which came	*sise solo na tua*
The crocodile which came	*nyengo dolo na tua*
The crocodiles which came	*nyeno dolo na ua*
The cow which came	*nago kolo na tua*
The cows which came	*nan' dolo na tua*
The bush pig which came	*teri kalo na tua*
The bush pigs which came	*tera solo na tua*

There would seem to be no rule as to whether one can use *kalo* or *kolo*, the variation between *dolo*, *solo*, and *kalo* being similar to that in the numeral adjectives.

Wolo and *balo* (singular and plural) are for human beings, but for *busankane*, a girl, one uses *kalo* and *solo*.

The Accusative form is as the Nominative.

N.B.—The locution *na* invariably is next to the verb and is used in both direct and indirect complements.

non' wolo tyem a na neia, the man whose arrow I saw

sisan' kalo nabili a na goni, the horse of which I cut the tail

sio kalo a na me a goni sisanga nabili, the knife with which I cut the horse's tail (lit., the knife which I used to cut . . .)

POSSESSIVE :

Mine	*a nyem*
Yours	*mo nyem*
His	*o nyem*
Ours	*deban nyem*
Yours	*abban nyem*
Theirs	*banto nyem*

Ex., *sisan kantaw ye a nyem*, This horse is mine; but it is usual to say, *sisan' kantaw yi a mo sisanga*, This horse is my horse.

ADVERBIAL:

Where? *yene?*
no songo wo yene? Where is your house?
How? *teta?*
mo tu teta mo? How did you come?
Why? *begwane?*
be ngwane mo ngwoga? Why did you steal?

INTERROGATIVE:

Who? *wawmo?* pl., *bramo?*
Who comes? *wawmo bine?*
What? *be mo?*
What do you say? *mo wo be mo?*

DEMONSTRATIVE:

This *kantaw*
These *sentaw*

Here, again, the variations between *dentaw*, *kantaw*, and *sentaw* are to be found in the desire for euphony:

sisan' kantaw sise sentaw
nago kantaw nan' dentaw

Apparently no distinction is made between "this" and "that." Again, however, one notices the variation for human being, *non' ontaw*, this man, etc., with the exception *busan' kane kantaw*.

PREPOSITIONS

These, as one would expect, are either expressed in the verb or by the use of subordinate clauses:

I came with my mother *a de de a'nu a ba*
With my brother I killed him *amo de a'nyani gu o*
I killed him with my knife *a me a'sio a gu o*
(lit., I used my knife I killed him)

There is to be noted a locative word *ni* used with various nouns :

in	*woni*
in my house	*a diga 'ni*
in the stomach	*puga 'ni*
under	*kuruni*
under the baobab	*tio kuruni*
behind	*kogane*
I live behind the rocks	*a ora pio koga'ne*

CONJUNCTIONS

and	*de*
neither—nor	*a o ne mo na a ni mo*
	I neither saw you nor heard you
either—or	*mo dyega bongo na mo ba dyega*
	Either you have the goat or not
that	*a tagha de mo we a ya tera kodyera*
	I tell you that I was not there
because	*a ye se a ya ora kodyera* |
	I know because I was there

VOCABULARY

aban, you, your
adyangwe, such a one
amo, me, my, mine, I
apasa, pardon (*pa apasa*, to forgive ; *lawré apasa*, to beg)
ba, not. (Negative used with Present and Future tenses.)
ba, neck
ba, to roll up
ba, to come
babam, some others
babia, brave, skilful
ba-deno, bachelor, widower
badon, friend
baghe, to crack
baghe, to scold, blame, accuse
baghsa, to chew
ba-ngwe, far
bakala, shoulder, wing
ba-kulu, goitre
bala, young male
ballanga, small, young
balora, small, young
balawro, ugly
bane, to fry
ban, to speak evil of
bana, heart
bane, to offer
bane, to explain
banga, bracelet
bangane, above, on
banto, they, them, their
banwira, to be sad
baraw, pl. *banna*, husband
bare, brave
baro, pl. *ra*, male
baro, pl. *ra*, accuser
basankwyan, pl. *kwe*, a poisonous snake
basara, tobacco for snuff
basene, pl. *na*, name
baya, pl. *baye*, grave-digger
bayiro, impolite, vulgar
bayirem, vulgarity
be, to cross a river
bebare, to pass behind, go around
bebe (*bi*), ford
bebegha, to gape at
bebeko, beak
bekera, pl. *ri*, youth
bello, pl. *la*, a Moshi
bemaw, what
bene, pl. *na yello*, year
beng, *bong*, *be*, to call
benga be, door-post
bere, to walk
bero, pl. *ra*, a walking man

bere to show, point out
bere, to put a burden on
bere, to faint, vanish
bese, to insult
besem, an insult
besem, a form of greeting—Hail!
bi, *bega*, to ripen
bi, one hundred
bin, indistinct, vague
biri biri, never
bibiga, to move (refl.)
bibili, to roll
bibirou, *bibi tille*, dark green
bili, to dirty oneself
bilsaga, sharpened, prepared
bilse, to tie up
nabino, pl. *na*, black man
bio, *biaw*, male (animal)
bira, pl. *ri*, wall
birisem, a wild plant, of which the bitter leaves are eaten
biri kogha, behind the house
bisili, straw roof
bisuma, child
bobogo, pl. *ro*, hemp
bobonga, thought, idea, memory
bodori, pl. *ra*, hoe
boghe, to throw stones
boghlem, the flesh of fruit
bokwo, pl. *kwa*, robust girl
bola, to be near
bolo, friend, lover (a word used only by women)
bone, envy, jealousy
bona, hole
bonga, *bong*, to think
bonga, a measure—calabash
bongo, goat
bongo, pl. *bonno*, root
bonnagha, pl. *bonne*, donkey
bonnag-bu, he-donkey
bonnag-nia, female donkey
bora, in suspension
bore, to wander about
bore, to cut in two
bore, pl. *ra*, naked
bore, to promise
boredia, banana
borem, promise
borotyega, door
boro-bu, key
boro, a good-for-nothing, vagabond
boro, a plant
botara, pl. *re*, store, history, palaver
botara mole, joke
botarebu, pl. *bia*, word
botyanaw, lung
botyare, heart
botyongo, in front of the house
bu, pl. *bia*, child, son, fruit, grain
bra, who, which
bua, pl. *bui*, salamander
bu-bala, a kid
bubura, to pour out, empty
bu-buru, blank

bu-dyoa, little she-goat
buga-nayu, a bridge
buga-yi, source
bugi, to be tired
bugu, *buga*, to soak
bugsi, to crush into flour, powder
bula, pl. *li*, a well
bula yi, a spring
bullu, rubbish heap
bura, reasoning, judgment
bure, to make a mistake
bure, an exclamation of disgust
bure, to spring from (of water)
burse, to make a sign to
butaro, pl. *ra*, orphan
bwo, to begin
bwom, beginning
bwole, to untie, undo
bwomma, without energy, weak
bwona, to be proud
bwona, pl. *ne*, mosquito
bwone, to weaken
bwono, fresh, damp
bore, to break
da, again
da, pl. *de*, -in-law (relation by marriage)
damba, host
da ba, no longer
dabunga, pl. *bonno*, a log
daga, pl. *de*, wood
dagha, to be numerous
daghe, to reverence, respect
daghem, respect
dagwonno, carpenter
daka, pl. *daghse*, box
dale, to shelter oneself
dallongo, pl. *no*, stick, cane, whip
dama, hard, solid, strong
dane, together with
dane, to visit
dane, to last
dane, power, force
dane, other
dane-tu, pl. *tine*, brave, powerful
danem, perseverance
dangaw, pl. *no*, wood put over the door-post to support the roof
dange, to place upon
dange, pieces of wood placed under the baskets
dare, to be (idea of continuation)
dare, after that, then
dare, some—others
daw, pl. *dawa*, brother-in-law
dayataw, the day before yesterday
de, to lay eggs
de-ia, to soak
de-ia, to eat, burn, be complete
de, to accompany (follow on the road)
de, and
de, because
de, dream

de, *dea*, to dream
de, pl. *da*, day
debban, we, us, our
dede, much
dedani, evening
dedaro, large, long, big
dederem, the other day
dedero, pl. *ra*, powerful
dedolon, perhaps, another day
dedonkogho, spider
dege, sterile
dele, to throw
dele garo yi, to weave
delem, to tick
dem, last year
dendela, hook
dendelem, tongue
dendia, dream
denla ('I am sorry' (to anyone who is ill)
dentaw, this
dere, numerous
derogo, mould used by blacksmiths for making hoes
di, *dia*, to eat, burn
di, pl. *dua*, species, family
diga, pl. *di*, compound
diga-bu, pl. *bia*, cat
diga-nu, pl. *nina*, mouse
digeme, to dirty, to be dirty
diku, pl. *digru*, dirty, dirtiness
dim, yesterday
din, *na*, to mount
dio, hard, resisting
dion, pl. *dina*, a large snake, a python
diri, to rub
disi, to lean on
do, each
doa, rain
doa, *daw*, to sleep
dodo, each
doe, more
dodoa, one
doge, to make a mistake
dogha, to ride
dom, sleep
done, to chew, bite
dongo, pl. *dora*, new, short, young
dongo, pl. *dore*, old
donne, to move
donna de, to be equal to, neighbour
donno, young
dono, pl. *na*, evil, hostile
dore, to sharpen
dore, to age
dore, pl. *ra*, axe
dua, tornado, rain
dug-dua, to answer by the thunder, to swear
dugu, certainly
du-l-lui, time after the harvest of early millet
du, pl. *duga*, to plant, planted, sow
dum, planting
duma, heavy
dun, planting time
dundua, spring, planting, first rain of planting

duni, to be heavy (of a man who enriches himself)
dura, new ; (*kasa dura*, new whip)
duri, to touch lightly
duru, spoon
duri, vulture
dusi, to scratch out
dri, to run
dyong, to take
dya-fuga, pl. *fui*, nail
dya-fule, pl. *la*, ring
dyazem, right, north, right hand
dyaghe, to overflow, scatter
dyagwia, south, left hand
dyam-ba, to bring
dyambatya, red grass-hopper
dyanni, to astonish, be surprised
dyan-vo, to take away
dyana, blood
dyana, to bleed
dyana tiksem, bruise, contusion, hurt
dyane, to render fruitful, fertilise
dyane, to jump, fly
dyang, to hold ; (*dyang bane*, be calm, be quiet)
dyanga, to struggle
dyankengo, pl. *keno*, jackal
dyara, quarrel, fight
dyare, to spread
dyaro, gambling
dyawino, pl. *na*, sick person
dyawio, ill, sickness
dyawne, to worship
dyaworogo, laziness
dyaworo-tu, lazy
dyawoti, net for chickens
dye, to loose
dyega, pl. *dye*, place
dyege, to have
dyeguli, handful
dyene, pl. *na*, debt
dyene, to sit down
dyen-fu-biaw, thumb
dyen-fule, ring
dyenfuga, nail (or *dyafuga*)
dyenga, a man on a seat
dyenga, pl. *dye*, arm
dyengo, saddle
dyengongo, chair
dyera, dispute
dyere, to transplant
dyere, to meet; (*non-dyeru*, pl. *ro*, hypocrite)
dye konkulu, stump
dye tale, palm
dye-togha, pl. *toe*, elbow
dye-tutogho, a stump of a leper
dyi, *dyira*, to become
dyidyugi, to twist
dyira, to refuse to declare what one knows; (*wo-dyiru*, an extraordinary thing)
dyoa, to-morrow ; (*dyome*, *den dyoa*, good morning)
dyoa yigane, day after to-morrow
dyoghaw, pl. *ro*, loin-cloth

dyogsa, to turn aside from somebody with contempt
dyom, fetish; (*kane dyom*, to sacrifice)
dyong, to defend, protect, accept
dyongo, special dance in beating calabashes
dyore, to hurt
dyore, to return
dyorega, bad; (bad boy, *bu dyorega*)
dyoro, soul
dyoro, fool
dyugi, to perplex
dwa, sauce, garden, vegetable
fagh (*a*) *e*, fashion, to make peace
faghe, to rough-cast a wall, repair a house
wo-fako, pl. *faghno*, creature
faghe-fia, to urinate
fagheno, creature
falema, to be thin
fana, razor, scissors
fana, vanity; (*vira de n'fana*, leave me alone)
fane, to shave
fang, to leap, jump
fanfa to, formerly
fanga-fanga, in former times
fani, winter, time of cold
fanyego, heat, hot
fara, peace; (*di fare*, to make friends)
fare, to make cool; (*we fare ne*, evening)
faro, Providence, benefactor
faro, big
fasi, completely, perfectly
fataw, except
faw, to take out of a heap; (*a faw bira*, I take some mortar)
fawne, to be afraid, fear; (*fawne-tu*, coward)
fe, to consolidate a thing
feka, narrow
fekse, to make narrow, be narrow
fela, pl. *le*, European (white man)
fele, to bruise, crush in pieces
fele, pocket (*garo fele*)
fellaka, thin man
fenfeta, mud
fera, gazelle
fera, an arrow-shaft
fera, desire
fere, to mend
ferega, pl. *fere*, gutter
ferega, to dirty, destroy a road
fey, very; (*a bugi fey*, I am very tired)
fi, to oblige, be forced
fia, urine
figle dim, to eat
fifio, action of forcing

figese, to take snuff, snivel
fike, to untie, tear off
fin-fin, little, small
finfita, mud
finle, twenty
finmomoa, to blow one's nose
fira, an arrow-shaft
fire, to peel, take off the hair
fire, to strike, slap
firem, word to encourage a sick man suffering
firo, sleek, bald
fisi, to become dry
fiu, white ant
fofala, thin
fofora, to scatter (*fofora tyonga ne sa ken*, let me pass)
fofon-vo, to move, draw back
fogha, to deny
foghe van, to lie
fogo, dust
fo e, to whistle; (*yi tan fola*, do not whistle)
fole, to hurt
folem, light
folo, sheath, case
fone, to skin
fonfele, a bird's crop
fongo, pl. *fono*, white ant
fore, to mould
fore n'vo, to get out; (*fofon vo*, *fore m'ba*, to stretch forward)
fue, the calf of the leg
fufolo, hurt, injury
fufugi, to put out of breath
fuga, pl. *finle*, ten, pl. twenty
fugi, to frighten by scolding
fula, to fan
fule, to blow; (*mon-fulogo*, a boaster)
fulsi, to take a piece
fulu, a fan
furi, to sip
fuse, to swell
ga-buga, bangle of grass
gaghe, to count
gala gala, opposite, over against
gale, to cross, stride over
galo, special dance
galse, to stride over, go beyond
gamse, to alternate, white and black
gane, to cut grass, coax; (*gane yu*, to cut the hair)
gane, to deceive; (*mo gane amo*, you have deceived me)
ganloghe, little bag in which to put tobacco or cowries
ganem, temptation, deceit, cheat
gao, grass, bush
gao, other, another
gao gana, horse-boy

gara, to be better
gar dyale, blanket, covering cloth
gare, to recover ; (*ko lan gara*, it is better)
gare, to cross ; to separate
garega, a bit, a bridle
garem, a cross ; separation
gara, bit
garo, coat
gar-kura, trousers
gar-le, needle
gar-ngwana, thread
garyi, Moshi cloth
gar-zeo, Moshi coat
ga-sengo, grass for roofing a house
gawro, pl. *rro*, paralytic
gean, to be stupid ; (*mogean keken*, you have missed)
ganenga, or *gena*, line
gera, rhinoceros
gerema, to trade
gero, to make a noise
gigila, to turn
gigili, to surround
gigilu, round
gilem, to rove around, wander
gnisi, to gnaw
gogorogo, corner ; (*bakala gogoro*, arm-pit)
gong-na, to catch fish
gongo, pl. *no*, hole
gore, to pluck feathers
gra, how much
gre, pl. *gra*, an ant-hill
gu, to kill
gugwole, to be crooked, bend, bow
non-gugwora, dangerous man
wo-gugwora, danger
gula, reward
gule, to reward
guli, to remember
gulu, big drum
guni, to incline
gunu, cotton, wild cotton tree
guri, to stir, dig out
guro, one who kills, murderer
gursao, thorn tree
non-guru, murderer
gwale, to fornicate
gwalwem, fornication, impurity
gwara, to take away the mud
gware, to provoke in quarrel
gware, to unite
gwarem, union
gwawne, to cut with a knife
gwe, to cut the millet when the stick is down
gwego (Moshi), a knife to cut horse-grass
gweke, to break a hoe
gwele, to turn on somebody in dissatisfaction
gwene, the wrong side, left

gwene, to pull out the hair
gwero, leopard
gwero, unripe
gwi, to turn
gwio, useless, unripe
gwogha, to take up, root out
gwole, a bent stick
gwona, to snore, lame, lag behind
gwone, to blame
gwong, to conduct, bring an animal
gwonga, a bit of land
gwonnu, marks on the face
gwora, pl. *re*, handle of hoe
gwore, to bend
gwore, to prevent a man from doing something
gwore, to gather
gwo yi dane, to share
gwungonga, small drum
ka, epileptic (*ka maghe nono*)
kaba, slave
kabakwile, heron
kabela, small pot
kabira, wall
kadiga, sterile woman
ka deno, widow
ka dikwa, daughter of the family
kadon, name given to two women living with one man
kadon, another
kaduga, farm near a compound
kafaw, fearful, coward
kafe, nothing, useless
kaghse, to be miserly
kaghsem, stinginess
kala, little water-pot
kala mo, quick
kale, to cover with earth
kale, to stir
kalegongo, kitchen
kallago, pl. *ro*, a good woman
kallanga, a bet
kallia, a monkey
kallifao, a hairy monkey, either baboon or black colobus
kallongo, hawk
kallogho, nape of the neck
kalo, one
kampira, provocation
kampola, a bet
kamse, to wink
kan, to open (as to open scissors)
kana, hunger; (*kana dyege ne*, I am hungry)
kananga, starvation
kande, stone
kandelem, an edible root like a potato
kandoe, pl. *doa*, stone
kane, to milk, sacrifice, conjure
kane, pl. *na*, woman; (*we kane*, first wife)
kanem, sacrifice
kantogho, discussion, dispute; (*maghe kantogo*, to discuss)

kanvara, red caterpillar
kanzagha, hemp (in Hausa, *rama*)
kanzue, white caterpillar
kaporo, a desert place
kara, to walk
kara, pl. *re*, farm
kare, to tear
karega, pl. *karse*, farm
karmalaka, the palate
karo, a rent, tear
kasa, to cry
kasela, a kind of caterpillar
kasendyo, a blood-sucking insect
kasolo(n), sand
kasogo, millet stalk
kate, self ; (*amo kate*, myself)
katogho, young woman, woman who has no husband
katore, pl. *tera*, a bit of land
katyare, to do on purpose
kawre, to fear, respect
kawro, pl. *ra*, water-pot, empty
kawse, to scrape
kuala, little hawk
kavaniono, brown colour
kayampia, pl. *pisi*, a stool
kayidra, time of marriage
kayira, pl. *re*, yellow-grass hopper good to eat
kazogo, a wooden mortar (to beat millet)
kazokera, little wooden mortar (to mash herbs in for sauce)
ke, to make (*faghe*)
kekano, a tree
kekare, to roll, wrap up
keken, perfectly, certainly
kekia, manner, way
kele, pl. *la*, cheek
kem, manner
kile, native belt made of leather
kileme, to roll
kembia, a pot with a big opening
ken, to pass ; (*vira tyonga ne sea ken*, let me pass)
kenka, native cake
kenkaghle, wonderful ; (*wonkenkaghle*, miracle)
kera, to cry, weep
kiesega, ash from the stalks of millet (*sien*)
kikilu, round
kirise, to spit between teeth
kiru, pl. *kyra*, place of death ; (*kira laro*, soul of a dead person)
ko, it, that, it is
koaba, to be quick
kodyo, exclamation
kogha, to dry
kogha, behind, after, back
koghle, to put tobacco between the cheek and teeth
kogho, dirty

kogho, crowd, troop, company
koghse, to catch flying
koghse, to put in a heap
kogo, pl. *ro*, feather, hair
kokawghe, to shake dust out of something
kokere, well, to do one's best
kokon, the other
kokwo, cough
kole, to cover
kolo, thing, affair; (*a ba ke kolo*, I do nothing)
kolo, gluttonous
konkawlo, a courtyard of hard-beaten mud
konkuale, a box to put tobacco in
konogo, violin
kontaw, that, so
kora, voice
kora kyem, roof of the mouth
kua, pl. *i*, bone
kukui, little, short
kukula, big, tall
kukule, to pack up, wrap in a cloth
kukugu, a part of, piece, short
kukura, a dog
kukwango, pl. *no*, sky
kulu, a hump on the back
kumunu, pl. *na*, big, fat, strong
kunkoro, owl
kunkwonpuri, pigeon
kuni, to tie
kuni, to mould
kun'm, pl. *kuna*, camel
kunu, knot, knuckle
kura, fireside, the hearth
kura, to move
kuri, the back, bottom
kuri, to choose
kursema, vivacity, rashness
kursi, to correct
kuru, choice
kuruni, under
kwala, cover (from weather)
kwanga, castanets
kware, to stop, fix
kwaw, to dig; (*ba kwaw bone*, they are digging a grave)
kwawba, to hasten
kwawgha, the back
kwawgha, a salute in entering a compound
kwawlema, affairs, thing
kwawne, to feed, stop a hole
kwawre, to roast
kwawre, to fear
kwawreme, to hem a coat
kwawreme, to fold
kwawte, to cut the throat
kwe, to be absent
kwe, to do good
kwea, time of harvest
kwelem, end, cessation
kweli, to cease

kweng, to watch
kwera, to play
kwera, the fore part of the neck
kwi, to bud
kwia, to cough
kwia, *kwi*, old, old man, superior
kwian, yeast from guinea-corn for pito
kwio, pl. *kweno*, white ant (eatable)
kwo, to be older
kwo, pl. *kwa*, father
kwogho, many, plenty, large quantity
kwola kwola, slowly
kwola, to pick up, take away, cover
kwone, to open one's eyes
kwonno, to rear up
kwora, throat, a horn
kwore, to finish (*dua kwore*, rain has stopped)
kyase, to brush, to comb
kyene, arrow
kyiro, pl. *ra*, a man or woman who changes into a fire during the night
kyiru, pl. *ra*, spirit
lagha, willing
laghe, to look, seek
laghem, will, pleasure
laghese, to lap
lago, pl. *ro*, good
lama, pretty, fine, good
lan, after, then
langa, in (speaking of ground)
lange, to taste
lango, pl. *no*, a mark, scar
lan-kan, now, then
lanyirane, very well, good
lare, to stay together to talk
lare, to untie (a cloth)
laro, fruit of locust-bean tree
lawghe, to break a calabash or a bottle
lawraw, pl. *ra*, mason
lawre, to dodge, steal
lawre, to beg
le, to clean a farm
le, to thank. Thank you!
le, *lega*, to shut, attach, hang
lea, fear, uneasiness
leghra, agony
leke, to lift something
lela, quick
lele, now
leliu, pl. *lelua*, blind
lena, to sing
lene, to exchange
lene, to sing
lenga, song
lenhsi, to stand on one's feet
lensi, to chew tobacco
lere, to answer
lerema, wet
lero, answer, weariness, misfortune

lese, to cut millet, leaving the stalk standing
lia, *li*, to mind
li, to mend
li, to swallow, stop a hole
lillaghe, to look for in the middle of ashes
lillero, saliva, spittle
lilliru, thick
lime, to cover again
lio, an awl
liri, to draw something out of water
liri, medicine; (*piaw liri*, gun-powder)
lisi, to plunge, upset, disappear
loe, to smell, feel
loghe, to deliver, beget, to hear
logo, world
loma, to desire
lom, to imitate
lona, to speckle
lone, to heat, warm
lone, to remember a want
lone, to imitate
lonem, imitation
long, to smell
longa, to avoid
longo, bad
lora de, festival
lore, to begin, be the first
lore, to learn, know
loro, gut, entrails
loron, enmity, hatred
lu, to dip into some sauce, to forge
lua, pl. *lui*, ceremony of funeral custom
lu(ga), to scrape
luga, pl. *lui*, a francolin
lugu, iron
lullona, pl. *ne*, crevice
lullongo, perspiration, heat
lum, to warm; (*lum na*, to boil some water)
luma, deep
luo, an awl (*sa luo* for making native mats)
lura, to leak
luri, to digest
lusi, to drive into
maghe, to strike
maku, pair of pincers
mama, all
mana, proof, success, good luck
mane, to remark, to prove
mang, to adjust, fit up, share; equal, equalise
mangem, line, mark, measure
mang . . . ni, to try (*mang poponem n'ni*, try to write)
mankaro, small bustard
mankaronao, pl. *nane*, greater bustard
manlaa, chameleon
manlatanga, rainbow
mantawro, toad
mantyifo, matches (obviously a corruption of English)
mantyogho, grasshopper

mao, eagle
maw, to draw up some water
mawne, to make some pots
mawra, pus
me, to use
me, to accustom one's self
meem, habit, custom
meem, a tool used by a blacksmith
mela, a little
mele, to be in great number
mele, to dress a loin-cloth between the legs
meme, slowly, with caution
memmanga, history; (*mang memmanga*, to tell a story)
memmila, little black ant
memmina, thin
mena, guinea-corn
mere, to crush in pieces
mi, to besprinkle
mia, bamboo
milem, to wrap about
mini, fire; (*min tyala*, char-coal)
miregem, mockery
mizongo, a lamp
mo, you, your
mo, here is, there is
moa, a stick to fix an arrow in
mole, easy, good price
momago, pl. *ro*, dumb
mommao, to stammer
mome, nose
mon, to draw up some water out of a well
morogo, *moro*, thousand
mumuna, rice
munu, flour
muri, little, not enough
mwona, to laugh
na, if, unless
na, water
nabare, grandfather
nabarega, stream
na-bengo, pl. *no*, cow dung
nabili, tail
nabino, pl. *na*, a human being
nabira-nongo, a big scorpion
nabogo, middle of a compound
nabono, bugle, musical instrument
nabwo, brother
nadia, a nervous sickness
na-dunno, rich man
naga, pl. *ne*, foot, calf, root, branch
nag-done, knee
nag-tyira, leg
nago, pl. *ne*, cow (*na bu*, a calf; *na-bala*, a young bull)
nag-pire, the sole of the foot
nag-tene, a ladder
natyoro, spur
nagwino, pl. *na*, small mosquito
nagwoa, a pond
nairo, shepherd
nankampona, pl. *ne*, the lesser egret

nakena, sister-in-law
nakera, a big pot for water
naklakao, small bustard
nakongo kuri, the ham
nakula, the heel
nakuri, pl. *ra*, buttock
nakwaw, sister
nakwion, pl. *kwi*, grandfather, old man
nanmandyua, pepper
namara, quiver
namen-bu, the toe
namuna, pl. *ni*, a horn used as a musical instrument
nandyua, pl. *e*, *fly*
naniom, thirsty
nantyale, testicle
nantyana, pl. *ne*, bangle made of grass
nantyane, thin grass to make small baskets
nanugri, pl. *ra*, sweet potatoes
nanwale, tobacco
nao, pl. *ro*, grandson
napana, pl. *ne*, a sling
napire, the sole of the foot
narge, to refuse to obey your master
nase, to trouble somebody
nasingo, red
natira, boot
natongo, an opening made in a roof
natulenga, pl. *lse*, great grandson
natye, pl. *ua*, young cow, heifer
natyegha, walking-stick
natyera, pl. *re*, the calf of the leg
nawne, to crush in pieces, bruise, knead
nayila, milk; (*nayila nuga*, butter)
nayongo, pl. *no*, leper
nayu, terrace
ndon, six
ne, in, towards, me; (*pa ne*, give me)
ne, pf. *nea*, to look, see
ni, pf. *niga*, to understand, hear
nifane, deceit, cheat
nem, sight
nena, it is raining
ngnisa, to gnaw, pick with the teeth
ngwana, rope, string
ngwane, for, in favour of
ngwanno, nerve, vein, artery
ngwe, to be near
ngwa, pl. *we*, guinea-worm
ngwe, to pay
ngwe, to live
ngwem, payment
ngwem, life
ngwene, theft
ngwenga, pl. *na*, good
ngwenno, pl. *na*, the living
ngweno, thief
ngwo, to spin, weave, twist
ngwoghe, to thieve
ngwolo, a ring to make a hoe stronger

ngwone, to swell
ngwone, to speak
ngwongo, vein, artery
ngwuna, to buzz, grumble
ni, pl. *nia*, mouth, edge, sharp, cutting, muzzle, beak
ni, time; (*ni de de*, several times)
ni, pf. *niga*, to hear, understand
ni, pf. *nia*, to look
ni, to be tired
niane, younger brother
nieniego, colour
ni koro, moustaches
niku, looking-glass
nim, look (act of seeing)
nima, lassitude, fatigue, tiresome
nina, pf. *niga*, to rain
nine, to have in abundance
ni-nue, the fleshy covering of the teeth
nisa, to disgust
ni-tonnogo, lip
n'le, two
n'na, four
nnana, eight
nnobogo, nine
nnu, five
noa, pl. *noe*, finger
none, pl. *na*, flesh, meat
nong, to go out
nongo, scorpion
nong'gwole, a reservoir to receive flour
nong mim, a stone which is used to grind millet
nongo, a stone on which millet is ground
non-kwian, pl. *kwi*, old man
nonnanga, native dancing
nono, pl. *na*, man, people
non-pongo, white man
non-zono, black man
ntaw, three
nu, pl. *nina*, mother; (*nu nakwian*, grandmother)
nuga, shea-butter (oil)
nuge, to be fat
nuguri-garo, blanket
nu-kuna, joint, knuckle
nyane, to sew
nyange, to walk
nyake, to answer violently
nyaw, to drink
nyawne, to be sick
nye, to make one's drink
nye, to shine
nyeghle, to obey with difficulty
nyem, appearance
nyena, father
nyene, to appear
nyene, to liquefy, melt
nyenga, an animal horn
nyengo, crocodile
nyenyego, image, likeness, picture
nyona, to be sour
nyone, chest
nyua, smoke
nyuan, meat broth

nyuri, profit
o, he, his
odon, pl. *badona*, the other, other
ontaw, this, that
ora, to be, exist
owo, no
p, the, that
pa, bile, choler (sickness)
pa, *pea*, to give, given; (*zo dyene*, to borrow)
pa, to drive; (*pa garem bangane*, to crucify)
pale, to vaunt
palle, to hang
pane, to support, set upon, press upon
pana, to weave
pare, wall
pare, to seek eagerly for, pursue, take down
pare, to reign, have power over
pare, peg
parege, to curse
patore, comet
paw, pl. *pogha*, to be rotten
pawre, to share, to separate
pawrem, explanation
paya, jaw, jawbone
pe, to pick up
pegha, salutation; (*akem pega*, I greet you)
pelapogho, square
pele, to hang; (*pele bankale*, to hang on the shoulder)
pele, to spill
pene, to lie down
pepagha, to shake a coat
pepangha, temple of the head
pepela, to light; (*dua pepela*, the lightning)
pere, a present
pere, proper, to be clean
pere, to flatter, to dry
pi, to shut up
pi, to beat the floor
pi, to pick up ground-nuts
pi, pl. *pia*, yam
pia, pl. *pene*, sheep; (*pe bia*, ram; *pe nia*, ewe; *pe pela*, lamb)
piaw, pl. *poa*, chief; (*piaw woro*, umbrella)
piawgo, pl. *ro*, gun
piaw-lire, gunpowder
pilma, a bangle made from grass
pina, to cheat at play
pine, to press, to oblige
pino, obligation, force; (*pino diga*, prison)
pino, pl. *na*, prisoner
pipi, to trade
pipini, to roll
pipino, trader
pipio, grey
pire, to make white
pire, to fold, to bow
piri, to break, destroy
pise, to clean, wipe
pisie, duck (wild)
piu, hill, mountain
poamena, maize (*kamana*)

poataro, interpreter
pogho, nest
poghle, to move, disturb
poghle, water-bubble
pogho, bark, peel
pola, unripe fruit
pola, interval
pole, to satisfy
pole, to bet, promise
pole, to do on purpose
pollagha, flat
pollawgho, large
polo, bastard
poma, to be light
pompala, beds of earth made to plant seeds in. Used also for the main roads because they are ditched
pona, fringe
pone, the light
pone, desert, outside
pone, to skin a beast
ponga, pl. *poe*, shelter
pongo, pl. *ne*, white ; (*mena dyega pongo*, the millet tassel)
poo poo, to watch, wait
popanga, slap, to slap
popara, to sparkle, to crackle
popawno, tree, the bark of which is used to tie things
popawro, to speckle
popio, grey, blue
popoma, to be light
popone, to write
popono, manure
popuga, to rub, to shake the dust off
popura, to itch
pore, to claw
pogo, pl. *ro*, bark
pote, to report, make a complaint
pu, to shut
pu-fara, gluttonous
puga, belly
puge na, to swim
pugi, to find
pugu, a cork, i.e., a stopper
pule, to fill, to satisfy
puni, entire, complete
punu, flower, a bud
pupura, speckle
puri, to open
pusempuga, froth, spume
pusogho, duck (wild)
pwe, to wait for
re, also
reban, we, us
s, that, to the end that
sabara, thorn
sabe, amulet, letter
sabilo, pl. *la*, boy, horseboy
sage, to fix a price to something
sage de, I have confidence
sagem, confidence
sale, to support, to lean
salema, glass, bottle
salesya, ant
salon, gold
sam, to wash (*sane dyian*, to wash hands)

sambuli, top
sampora, prophet
sana, pito, beer
sane (*sine*), porcupine
sang, to take summons
sango, pl. *no*, side, rib
sange, to be next, sit by
sange, to cook
sange, grass which is used to make native mats
sanguelene, a locust-bean
sankora, a sickness
sanyiga, west
sara, mat
sara, stick to roof
sare, to make thin, sharpen
sase, to excite
sase, to tease
saw, which ? who ?
sawle, to curse
se, that, to the end that
se, pl. *sua*, fruit of shea-butter tree when ripe
se, ivory bangle
se, to take a bath
sea, to agree, to answer
sebaro, pl. *na*, enemy
sebu, pl. *bia*, cowrie
seem, ablution, baptism
seghe, to hide
seghem, secret
sele, hammer of blacksmith
sele, poisoning of arrows
sele, to tempt
sellegra, the hiccough
sembuli, flower of locust-bean tree
sempira, a stick to beat the floor with
sene, to salute, greet
sene, towards, near by
sene, sickle
sen-yaghele, calabash of a sorcerer
sensola, *le*, fable, story, history
sera, to slip
sera, evidence; (*sera tu*, witness)
sesogha yela, to gnash the teeth
si, to rest, breathe
si, to fill, load
sia, peas
sibia, pl. *sibi*, a stick to beat millet with
sie, to forget
sien, ash from millet stalks
sien sieon, quick! quick!
sero, locust-bean pod
siga, a ball of prepared flour
sigi, to reflect
silegha, the hiccough
sin, to stop a hole
sine, on purpose
sine, to make red, to ripen
singo, red
sio, knife
siokaro, sickle
sire, to grow rusty
sirekwe, hedgehog
siri, to let loose (leaves which fall down from trees)

sisagro, a cold in the head
sisanga, pl. *sise*, horse
sisene, boundary
sisenga (*bu*), a baby
sisinga, to grumble, rumble as thunder
so, to love, like
sofaro, a fine big house
sogha, to sew
soghe, to give advice (either good or bad)
sogo, noise
sole gole, to make food
soma, to be sweet
sone, beans
songo, pl. *no*, shea-butter tree
songo, pl. *san*, a compound
sonno, millet ear
sone, to attend a sick man
sono, pl. *na*, lovely
sore, soft
soro, sticky
sorose, splinter
sara, tobacco reduced to powder either to chew or snuff
su, to fill
sua, intelligence, reason, sense
sugi, to frighten
sugu, pl. *ne*, guinea-fowl
suli, to bury
sulle, to put a pot on another pot
sulon, red ant
sunnuga, pl. *nui*, ground-nut
sura, to grumble softly
susugu, to shake a man, to awaken him
ta, again; *tata*, after
ta, to shoot an arrow
tabele, to paste
ta-bia, seeds of tobacco
ta da, a stick which is used for pipes
tadoa, pipe
taghe, to say, to tell
takere, the hip
tale, to hold flat on the hand underneath
tale, to smooth with the hand
tama, insipid
tambola, smallpox
tampogho, leather bag
tan, continually
tana, to touch, feel in the dark
tane, to put one near another
tanfiro, currier, a leather-dresser
tanga, a bow
tange, to make a mark with a finger, draw
tangola, a plant which is used for face-marking after cutting
tangwam, sacred place
tankawlo, skin ready for wearing
tannogo, ball of tobacco
tasawro, a steel to strike a light with

tasugu, a lid made of grass
tata, again
tato, so, as
taw, what ?
taw, to fall down
tawghe, to | follow, | accompany
tawghno, pl. *na*, follower
tawgho, pl. *ro*, abuse
tawke, to carry a child on one's shoulder
tawle, to shout from com-|pound to compound
tawne, to vomit
tawne, beard
tawno, hunting-man
tawre, to light
te, give me
te, to pour some water
te, to belong to
te, to be near
te, how
te, pf. *tea*, to pick up
te, to respect, glorify
te, pl. *toe*, fruit of |baobab
tebe, to look after, nurse
teken, *teken*, always
tem, |to cough |
tem, property
tem-baro, father-in-law
ten, to stretch the arm
tene, home
tene, to mend
teng, to press between two stones
tenga, loins; (*tenga ne*, side)
ten-kane, mother-in-law
teo, pl. *tero*, baobab
teponga, dry season
tera, not, not present
tere, pl. *ra*, wild boar
teri tera, different things
tero, pl. *ra*, master
tetare, middle (*wea tetare |ne*, noon)
tetar-nua, |middle finger
tetawgo, a basket
tetaw-kera, little |basket
tete, self
tete, night
tete-kawro, midnight
tetoe, a rat
tetogha, the chin
tetone, to draw back
tetonno-tetonno, frequently
tetyaka, pl. *tetyaghse*, |famine, scarcity
ti, to end, finish
ti, to string pearls
ti, to sneeze
tiaw, pl. *tini*, a granary
tiga, earth, ground, country
tikera, small granary for |ground-nuts
tikse, to assemble, join, re-unite
tiksem, assembly, reunion
tillero, mortar
tin, *dua tin*, it is raining
tine, to pay
tine, to endeavour
ting, to keep, preserve, put
tingu, deposit
tintaro, mud

tio, pl. *tene*, a tree; (*tio bia*, fruit)
tio, pl. *tini*, village, community
tire, to bend
tiri, forehead
tiro, earth, tillage, good earth
titige, to wipe, anoint, reduce
to, pl. *tua*, dead
toa, pf. *tiga*, f. *ti*, dying, to die
toa, little ant
togha, a stick used to make holes to plant millet in
tonge, to work, send, give order
tontawrem, ash
tontonga, work; (*tontongna*, to work the whole day)
tore, to sit on one's heels
tore, to take some, to choose
toro, sugar, a sweet thing
tosa, big black ant
tra, to itch
tu, pl. *tina*, master, owner
tu, elephant
tui, to come frequently
tula, pl. *li*, granary
tule, doing in the wrong way; (*motule*, you are a fool)
tulsi, to pass again
tum, death (*tum de*, the day of death)
tuntunga, labour; (*tuntung tu*, the labourer, i.e., the owner of labour)
turi, to draw on the ground
turi, to anoint
turu, anointing
tusi, to lose the road, be lost in the bush
ty, to abuse
tya, to smoke
tyago, a pot with many holes to water fowls
tyagoa, pieces of iron
tyake, to be happy
tyala, embers, charcoal
tyale, to take hold of somebody by surprise
tyalega, prodigal
tyama, bitter, bad; (*moyagha tyama*, you are selling dear)
tyampongo, pl. *no*, chain
tyana, suffering, pains
tyana, moon, month
tyana, copper
tyanina, hail
tyara, early millet
tyara, to have diarrhœa
tyare, to make a present with a view to obtaining a favour in the future
tyare, to winnow
tyasa, to comb one's beard
tyase, perfect, entire
tyasega, a comb
tyavira, ashamed
tyawghe, to be spoilt

tyawgh'no, a man who spoils
tyawghse, catching
tye, to lead
tye, to fence
tyefeo, a basket for carrying chickens in
tyega, the truth
tyegele, charcoal
tyeghe, to watch, surprise, wait
tyeghe, to keep silence, stop a noise
tyelema, tomato
tyem, to be quiet
tyene, stinginess
tyenfone, soap
tyenge, pl. *no*, hippopotamus
tyeng, to forbid
tyepuga, twenty cowries; a fibre which is used to wrap round an arrow to hold it in the shaft
tyera, difficulty, painful
tyere, to cut into pieces with the teeth
tyere, to wipe with the fingers
tyerese, to spit between the teeth
tyese, to be disgusting
tyesega, ash of millet stalk
tyesem, disgust, dislike
tyetyare, pl. *ra*, egg
tyi, spear
tyi, to stop by force
tyiaw, hard, difficult, tiresome
tyilleme, pl. *ma*, the eye-teeth or fang
tyim, abuse
tying, to dispute
tyiro, proper brother
tyityawghe, to spoil (a boy)
tyityawko, spoilt boy
tyityero, half
tyityira, pl. *ri*, devil child
tyityo, mad
tyityongo, bad character
tyityorogo, a mysterious thing
tyo, to pinch
tyo, pl. *a*, a locust-bean
tyo, to be mad
tyoa, to watch, look after
tyogo, pl. *ro*, a net
tyogho, water-pool
tyolon, friend
tyom, to grind
tyonga, pl. *tye*, road; (*vele tyonga*, to travel)
tyonga, pl. *tye*, quiver
tyonge, to sting
tyongo, a poison used by the Builsa to kill people with in ordeals
tyora, to boil
tyore, to share
tyore, to cover with earth, heap up
tyoro, pl. *tyene*, fowl (*tyo-bu*, young fowl; *tyo-bio*, cock; *tyo-nia*, hen)

tyotyawghe, a boy who is doing what he likes
tyotyawko, a boy who is spoilt
tyu, to drive a stick in the ground
tyua, pl. *a*, thigh
tyuga, to jump down
tyula, to forbid, hate
tyulatyue, stars
tyulem, hatred, hate
tyuli, to hate
vallo, farmer
van, lies, falsehoods ; an expression invariably used to preface a rebutment of an accusation
vanga, pulling
vanne, refusing to give
vao, the mane of an animal
vare, to plough
varo, pl. *ra*, animal
varongo, bestiality
vase, to pull suddenly
vata, a lean man
vaw, pl. *voro*, leaf
vaw, to consult a sorcerer
vawghe, to tie, chain ; (*vawghe ni*, to fast)
vawro, pl. *vane*, a hoe
ve, pf. *vega*, to disobey, refuse
vean, poison
vele, to walk (*a ve*, I go ; *a vele*, I went ; *a o vo*, I shall go)
venga, departure, walking
vera, to walk
vere, to scrape from one's hand
vere, to save, steal by force
vere-no, Saviour
vero, stranger
vesa, filthy, dirty
vevaghe, to move oneself
vi, to ask, beg several times, claim
vi, to dive into
vila, cartridge
vio, the wind
viri, to go away
viri, to knead, dilute ; (*vir munu*, to put flour into water)
viviri, to turn round
voe, to sit on eggs
vom, consultation
vom, a girth, thong
vongo, pl. *no*, the shoulder
voro, pl. *ra*, sorcerer
vovaghe, to move oneself
vuri, to bite ; (*tyere*, to make a notch)
vusemvunga, pl. *vusenvi*, a wasp that builds mud-cells
vuvuge, to agitate
wa, to be capable, have power
wanga, pity, mercy ; *driwanga*, to pity
ware, to punish, stop raining
ware, to salute, pray

warem, prayer
warem, penitence, sorrow
ware-zonga, basin
waro, cold
wasa, to speak in a low voice
waw, who, which
waw, to fry
waw-nua, the ring-finger
way, nothing
we, sky, weather, the atmosphere; (*wete*, at what time; *we ne*, in the air)
we, that, because
we, God; (*we o dyan 'ko yi n'songo*, good-bye)
we, to bark
wea, the sun; (*den wea*, good day)
weke, to press and open a nut
were, to warm, sit near fire
were, to wipe away
wero, dirty, dust
wi, an anvil
wi, to pick up groundnuts with their leaves
wi, to evaporate
wila, to be sick
willum, hot, heavy weather
wio, pl. *ro*, hole of a hoe to put the handle in
wio, character of a man, state of a person
wire a bane wira, I am sad
wiri, to blow fire
wiru, pl. *ra*, hyena
wissi, perfectly
wiu, yellow
wo, pl. *ro*, belly
wo-fagh, creature
wogela, pl. *le*, a little edible plant
wokoro, empty
wolla, to add
wolle, to help
wollem, help, assistance
wo-lim, an incomplete thing, part
wollonge, a bad thing, bad news
wo-dua, seeds
wongo, pl. *wonno*, thing, affair
woni, in, inside
wore, to be cured, recover
worem, cure, recovery
wore to to to, expression of wonder
woro, shade; (*piaw woro*, umbrella, i.e., a Chief's shade: an expression due to the white man's presence—not of Ashanti origin)
wu, to blow a horn, whistle
wua, pl. *wi*, a whistle
wunga, a gazette
wure, to grumble, like thunder and wind
ya, particle which shows the imperfect
yaghe, to leave off, abandon, forsake

yale, to make wide, scatter
ya'ema, large, wide
ya na, since
yare, to suffer
yaw, without value, foolishly
yawlo, an ostrich
ye, to yawn
ye, pl. *yua*, a forked stick which supports the terraces in the hill farms
ye, to be
ye, to marry (give in marriage)
ye, salt
ye, to know, acknowledge, pay attention
ye, where ? which place ? (*o o ye mo ?* where is he ?)
yede, wintertime
yegha, pl. *ye*, market
yeghe, to buy, to sell
yele, pl. *la*, tooth
yene, to leave
yenna, learned men
yera, guinea-corn (red or white)
yere, ignorant
yere, to learn
yerego, pl. *ro*, the forge of a blacksmith
yereponga, to lie down on the back
yero, pl. *rro*, blacksmith
ye tene, where from ?
yeyeghe, to move, shake
yeyelaghe, to agitate a liquid in a pot
yi, to penetrate, go through
yi, pl. *yia*, eye ; (*yi tono*, eyelid ; *yi kogo*, eyelash)
yi, to have, obtain, grow
yia, frafra potato
yibse, to beckon with one's hand
yiem, ownership, good
yiga, pl. *yi*, face, figure, visage ; (*yiga yiga*, very far ; *a ti a yiga*, I am ready)
yigu, witness in marriage
yila, breast ; (*ngwoghe yila*, to soak)
yige, to push ; (*yigi n'di*, to pull down)
yila yila, dawn
yinniga, misery, want ; (*yinniga-tu*, poor man)
yipura, pride
yira, body ; (*yira yira*, separately ; *a yira sore*, I feel myself sore all over
yire, to watch
yire, pl. *yira*, name
yiri, to retake
yirr, silence
yo, here
yolo, bag
yoma, good to eat ; (*yoma ko doe*, better)
yone, goodness ; (*non yone*, good man)
yone, pl. *na*, fish ; (*yone-dela*, a fish-hook)

yongo, courteous, generous
yore, to leave one road and take another
yore, to melt
yrane, alone
yu, to crush into pieces
yu, pl. *yuni*, head
yueya, twin
yuleo, pl. *ro*, comb
yunge, to brew, dilute
yu-tu, pl. *tina*, superior
za, an exclamation
za, to shake (something) in a basket
zaghe, to change
zaghe, to cut with an axe
zam, to mix with one's hand
zamse, to study, learn
zan, good, well
zane, to greet, salute
zane, to mix food in water
zanem, diluting, mixing
zange, to stand up, lift up, awake
zango, big
zarbe, to be worn out
zare, to make a horse run
zare, hammer of a blacksmith
zawghe, to beat in a mortar
zawre, to sweep, to brush
zawse, to have pity; (*a zawse a pa*, I pity)
ze, pf. *zega*, to burn
ze, to finish
ze, millet
zege, to stop, wait; (*zege wene*, to stand up)
zegera, standing there
zei, pf. *zei*, to scratch
zei, to take a bit out of a heap
zei, pl. *zoa*, a broom
zela, load; (*zela-tu*, carrier)
zele, to drive, put to flight
zem, to-day
zeng, to carry, lift up
zenzegane, morning
zera, a present
zere, to weigh
zere, to wash, clean
zerebi, old clothes, rag
zezagha, watering, to moisten
zezeghe, to shake
zezonno, rag
zim, quiet, silence
zin, steadfastly
zizi, to spread
zo, to go in, to prepare one's clothes when a woman is married
zokogho, deaf
zombaro, pl. *ra*, big brother, big sister
zone, hare
zore, to get dark; (*tiga zore*, it is getting dark)
zonga, pl. *zoen*, calabash
zongo, pl. *no*, beads
zono, black
zore, to be black
zore, to lay down a load

zorem, an entrance
zu!a, respect, to please
zulugu, hammock
zuma, to hurt, be painful
zumpogho, a nest
zunga, pl. *na*, bird
zunzunga, rag
zunzonno, completely worn out
zura, humidity, coolness, peace, health
zura, to be late, come slowly
zeri, to make cool
zurum, humidity, coolness
zuzuge, to shake
zuzura, slowness

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